

THE FIRST THREE KINGS
OF ISRAEL

P R E F A C E.

THIS work is based on a series of discourses delivered about twenty years ago, which the Author has been repeatedly urged to publish. Something has been done to connect the subjects of the discourses, so as to make the explanations more continuous. In other respects the matter is substantially the same ; and there is little difference in the form, except that chapters with titles have been substituted for sermons with texts. The introductory remarks render any further observations here unnecessary.

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BOOK I.

THE REIGN OF SAUL.

INTRODUCTORY.

ISRAEL DESIRES A KING.

I *Samuel* viii.

I HAVE long desired, I have for some time intended, and I am now to attempt to explain that portion of the Israelitish history comprehended between the beginning of the reign of Saul and the end of the reign of Solomon.

I am well aware of the arduous, I had almost said hazardous, nature of this undertaking. Were my task limited to an elucidation of the historical sense, and a practical application of the historical circumstances, there might be little cause for apprehension. But without undervaluing this kind of instruction, yet as a minister of the internal Word my principal aim must be far higher than to supply it. Knowing, and addressing myself to those who know, that the Word contains a spiritual meaning within, and distinct from that of the letter, my primary aim must be to unfold and apply it. It is in attempting this that I have some just cause for anxiety. The Scriptures in their literal sense have received so much attention from learned expositors and pious commentators, that any one who has to deal with that sense only can derive great assistance from the labours of others. Not nearly so much so he who undertakes the exposition of this part of the Word according to its spiritual sense. In the works of our great expositor we have, besides a minute explanation of the first two books of the Old Testament and the last book of the New, many other passages of the Word incidentally elucidated. But of these, few comparatively belong to the historical books of the Old Testament, while, unlike the Prophets and Psalms, they have received from his matchless pen no summary exposition. True, we possess a key to the heavenly mysteries of the Word in the Science of Correspondence. This enables us to see the cloud of the letter radiant with the glory of the sun that shines in splendour behind it; while the explanations we possess of particular passages that lie scattered throughout these immortal works, like the sun's rays streaming through the opening clouds, connect with lines of light the heavens and the earth, and while they light up with peculiar brightness the favoured spots on which they fall, throw light at the same time on parts that lie beyond their direct

influence. But with all these advantages it is not without some degree of hesitation that I approach the present momentous and important subject. Any one who has read but a small portion of the works to which I have referred, must be satisfied how much more is required than a mere knowledge of correspondence to enable one to unfold any part of the Divine Word; and how comparatively imperfect must be the results of the application of this science by any one possessing but an ordinary share of that enlightenment under which they were so evidently written.

I offer these remarks, not for the purpose of magnifying the difficulties of the subject, or of enhancing the value of the labour bestowed upon it, but with the view of showing you how much reason you have to be moderate in your expectations and charitable in your judgments.

Besides these reflections which apply to us as speaker and hearers—and I may now add, as writer and readers—there are others that apply alike to us both. It becomes us all without distinction to approach the subject in a devout and reverent spirit. The place on which we stand is holy ground, and we require to tread it with holy fear and profound humility. In our eagerness to see this great sight we may turn aside too hastily from our ordinary thoughts and temporal interests, forgetful of the danger of coming into the more immediate presence of the Divine glory without first putting the shoes from off our feet, by removing from our minds the artificial covering which it assumes from sense and the world. Spiritual truth cannot be seen except in spiritual light, nor can its power be felt except under the influence of spiritual love. For these, therefore, we ought to look and pray.

Before entering on an examination of the particular events of this history, it may be useful to view it in its relation to other portions of the historical Word with which it is connected, in order to ascertain the place it occupies in the typical history of which it forms a part, and to glance at its general scope and meaning.

The Sacred Record presents the representative people as living under several different forms of government. We find them ruled successively by patriarchs, priests, judges, and kings. Under a political view, these may be understood to mark the natural stages of their national development. Regarded in an ecclesiastical light, the succession of these different forms of government describes the decline of the Israelitish Church from a simpler and purer to a more artificial and imperfect state. As commonly expressed, the children of Israel, originally a theocracy, became less and less under the immediate government of the Divine Ruler. Under the patriarchal and priestly government the Israelites represented that state of the Church when

it yields a willing submission to the mild and gentle sway of Divine love and justice ; while under the judicial and regal government they represented the state of the Church when it gives a constrained obedience to the authoritative laws of Divine truth and judgment. Such is the internal historical sense of this aspect of the Israelitish history.

In its spiritual sense, which is a history of the spiritual life of the individual man, these successive changes in the government of Israel describe man's descent from higher to lower states. During the age of infancy and childhood the human being is ruled by love, but as these states recede before the strengthening passions and increasing reason, the mind comes more under the government of truth. There is thus in the earlier period of human life a descent resembling that which takes place in a declining church. In the individual case, however, these changes of state do not of necessity run through a course of moral or spiritual exhaustion. On the contrary, provision is made during the mind's descent for its re-ascent with increased intellectual power and means for its elevation.

It is thus of the mercy and wisdom of the Divine Providence that when the sweet influences of love become insufficient of themselves to rule, truth should assume the reins and curb the headstrong passions. If this were not the case, both the Church and the human being would fall into irremediable disorder, which would end in total and irretrievable ruin.

In the history of Israel we find the clearest traces of the representative circumstances of the subject of which we are now speaking. The immediate occasion of the Israelites asking a king was the ill conduct of Samuel's sons. Samuel himself had been raised up to stand in the breach that had been made by the corrupt house of Eli, whose sons had indulged in a course of such gross and unrestrained licentiousness that men abhorred the offering of the Lord. The sons of Samuel the judge had come to be too much like the sons of Eli the priest. They "turned aside after lucre, and took bribes, and perverted judgment." Thus we find that the priests had lost their influence and the judges had lost their power. No longer able to preserve order in the commonwealth of Israel, a king had become necessary for the preservation of the national existence, as well as for continuing the representative character which it had been chosen to sustain. Still, it was the substitution of a lower for a higher power.

When "all the elders of Israel gathered themselves together, and came to Samuel at Ramah, and said, Now make us a king to judge us like all the nations, it displeased Samuel, and he prayed unto the Lord : and the Lord said, Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee, for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected Me, that I should not reign over them."

It is the Lord's desire that His Church and His children should live and act under the government of His love, to which His truth is subordinate and instrumental. This is the perfection of order. Into this order man was created. Into this order man is still providentially initiated in his infancy and childhood. The capacity of loving God above all things and his neighbour as himself is the condition proper to that being who was created in the image and likeness of his Maker. God is Love; and Divine Love desires to reproduce itself in the hearts and lives of its created recipients. When man first departed from the law of love, it was because he would not have a God of love to reign over him. And when man desired to be ruled by the law of truth rather than by the law of love, the Lord granted him his desire, but He granted it as a thing He permitted rather than willed, and as a temporary rather than as a permanent condition; for truth is given that it may lead to goodness, and thus to love, whose servant and minister it is.

It was to mark the disinclination of the Divine mind to this degradation of state in the Church and in the human mind that the Lord protested while He granted, and, as stated in another place, that He gave the people a king in His anger, and took him away in His wrath. Of course there is no anger in God. Wherever this passion is ascribed to the Divine Being it is for the purpose of expressing a state of the human mind in contrariety to the Divine mind. When God's love is quenched in the human mind, anger is kindled in its stead; and this is called the anger of God, because God's love, which still flows into the mind, is turned into its opposite; for "an opposite has birth from the cessation of the existence in some one thing, and the rising up of another at the same time with a tendency contrary to that which the former existence had, acting as a wheel against a wheel, or a stream against a stream."

Well might the change we are considering be condemned and protested against by the Most High. The grounds of that protest, as they related to the condition of the people themselves, were rehearsed to them by Samuel. They were told that the king whom they desired would take their sons, and appoint them for himself for his chariots, and to be his horsemen; that he would take their daughters to be confectioners, and cooks, and bakers; that he would take their fields, and vineyards, and oliveyards, and give them to his servants, and the tenth of their seed, their vineyards, and their sheep; in one word, that he would appropriate to his own use whatever they possessed. We know that whatever principle rules in the human mind, and thence in the Church and in the world, it makes all things subservient to itself. The kingly rule in Israel was a type of the rule of intellect rather than of affection. And whenever religion becomes a matter chiefly of the intellect, the goods

and truths of the Word are employed to advance the glory of man more than the glory of God. As the sons of Israel were to be taken by the king for charioteers and horsemen, to fight the king's battles and adorn his pageants, so the truths they represented are used by the intellectual man to aid him in his intellectual conflicts and exalt his intellectual displays. As their daughters were to be taken for confectioners and cooks, so the affections of good which they represented are made to minister to the appetites and passions by affording them gratification suited to their sensual desires. As the men-servants and maid-servants were to be taken to do the king's work, so the truths and affections of science are employed to confirm whatever the mind adopts as a principle and desires to uphold. When this is the state of the Church and of man, even the remains of goodness and truth are appropriated by and made subservient to intellectual supremacy, which is the same as charity being made subordinate to faith, and which is meant by the king taking the tenth of their seed, their vineyards, and their flocks. Nay, all the celestial and spiritual things of the Word, general as well as particular, are brought into a state of servitude, for all Israel were to become the king's servants.

But that of which we are now speaking is a state of comparative, not absolute, disorder. Absolute disorder is disorganization. That which was now granted to Israel is a less instead of a more perfect order, an order which is established under the law of truth, which is comparative bondage, instead of that which exists under the law of love, which is perfect freedom. The law of truth, and the organization resulting from it, though not absolutely the best, may yet be the best under the circumstances. This fact is of the utmost importance, and may be applied in every department of human affairs, public and private. There is a perfect law, and a perfect order which is the result of obedience to it; and we ought to place that law before us, and constantly strive to reach it. But while we ought to aspire after the highest ideal of personal and public excellence, we must not imagine that everything short of its attainment is a failure. Were the law of love the ruling principle among the nations and families of the earth, the condition of mankind would be widely different from what it is. There would be peace on earth, goodwill amongst men. The means and energy now spent in preventing evil would be expended in doing good. But who, except the most ignorant and anatical, would imagine that crime would cease with the abolition of a criminal code, or ambition expire with the disbanding of standing armies? These and other means of protection and preservation from each other are indeed evidences of the degenerate state of the human race. But what would the human race, in its present state, be without them? Crime and anarchy and conquest would reign; but their

reign would be of short duration, for society would soon be dissolved, and the human race would perish.

Since, then, the law of love cannot find its place in the hearts of men, it is a blessing, though a lesser one, that they can be brought under the law of truth.

We see, therefore, both the wisdom and the goodness of God in the answer which He gave to Samuel, when that eminent prophet was disposed to deny the people their request that he would make them a king like the nations. A king had indeed become a necessity to Israel. The priest had failed, the judge had lost his power. Every man did that which was right in his own eyes; and what appeared to every one to be right was in many cases wrong. Their enemies, too, had acquired considerable dominion over them. Nothing could save them but a new and more powerful governor. It was a perception of this need that led the people to answer Samuel's protestation with the declaration, "Nay; but we will have a king over us; that we also may be like all the nations; and that our king may judge us, and go out before us, and fight our battles."

But the Divine command to Samuel to acquiesce in the people's desire was not only to prevent their further degradation, but to provide the means of their elevation; and there can be no doubt that during the reign of the first three kings at least the Israelites made great and rapid advancement in all that concerned them as a people, and made them a wealthy, powerful, and united nation.

The spiritual meaning of their history during this period describes a state of spiritual advancement in the religious life of those who are Israelites indeed. The beginning of the kingdom of Israel may be considered as representing the beginning of that upward progression by which the kingdom of God is begun in the human mind; and the history of the first three kings describes its advancement from natural to spiritual, from spiritual to celestial. The natural, the spiritual, and the celestial are represented by Saul, David, and Solomon. It will be our principal aim to unfold the sacred history as it applies to these several states and stages of the regenerate life.

But there is another and still higher subject to which the history of the first three kings of Israel relates, and which demands our earnest attention. The Holy Word, which, in its interior sense, treats of the regeneration of man, in its inmost sense treats of the glorification of the Lord; for the Lord made His humanity Divine by a process analogous to that by which He makes man spiritual. This Divine subject, although too exalted for us to dwell upon continuously, has yet so important a relation to that of the regeneration of our own souls that it is profitable to see their connection.

There can be no doubt that the first three kings of Israel were types, two of them at least eminent types, of the Lord Jesus Christ in His regal character; and that their history is, in its inmost sense, a history of the Lord's inner life and experience when manifested in our nature upon earth, and while He was engaged in glorifying His humanity and effecting the work of human redemption.

We are instructed in the writings of the Church, that, in the progress of His glorification, the Lord first made His humanity truth Divine, then Divine truth, and lastly Divine good (*A. C.* 7014). We can easily see that, in these three general stages of His progressive glorification, the Lord was represented by the first three kings of Israel. Saul represented Him as truth Divine, David as Divine truth, and Solomon as Divine good. To express it still more accurately and fully,—the history of the reign of Saul, of David, and of Solomon, is a typical history of the Lord's inner life and experience while He was making His humanity truth Divine, Divine truth, and Divine good.

As the reign of Saul is first to be considered, and as the history of Saul's reign is interwoven with the early history of David, even as the anointed king of Israel, it is desirable we should see clearly the difference between truth Divine, which Saul represented, and Divine truth, which was represented by David. Truth Divine, as distinguished from Divine truth, is truth such as it is in heaven, as distinguished from truth such as it is above heaven. Truth divine is Divine truth finited, by being received and apprehended by finite minds, as those of the angels are; Divine truth transcends all finite apprehension. Truth Divine is sometimes in the Writings called truth *from* the Divine, as distinguished from truth which is *in itself* Divine. I do not say which is *in* the Divine; for I conceive that Divine truth, in its most comprehensive sense, includes all truth which is in itself Divine, not only as it is in the Lord Himself, but as it is in all the spheres and degrees that intervene between the infinite mind and the highest finite minds, by which infinite Divine truth is made fit for entering into the minds of angels and men.

Truth Divine, or Divine truth in heaven, constituted the Lord's humanity before the Incarnation. When the Lord's Divine truth flowed into the minds of the angels it took a human form in their will and understanding. It was through this humanity that the Lord acted upon the human race before the time of His Advent. Therefore whenever the Lord appeared to men on earth it was in the person of an angel. But as His angelic humanity became in course of time, by mankind receding from heaven, inefficient as a medium through which the Lord's love and truth could flow down into the minds of men, the Lord came into the world, and assumed humanity in the womb of the Virgin. He thereby made His humanity a separate essence, raising

it by glorification into union with His own infinite and eternal Divinity. Thus the Lord provided a medium of salvation above and besides that which existed in heaven, and became Himself, as to His glorified humanity, the Mediator between God and man. Love and light from God still come to men through heaven; but besides this mediate influx there is now immediate influx from the humanity of the Lord Himself, by which the human mind can be interiorly affected and enlightened, and therefore interiorly regenerated.

In a special sense, Saul, as representing truth Divine, represented the humanity of the Lord in heaven before the Incarnation, and David, as representing Divine truth, represented the humanity of the Lord after His manifestation in the flesh. Yet since the Lord made His humanity truth Divine before He made it Divine truth; or, what is the same, since the Lord regenerated His humanity before He glorified it (*A. C.* 3138); Saul represented the Lord's humanity while it was being regenerated, as David represented the Lord's humanity while it was being glorified. The Lord regenerated His humanity when He made it truth Divine, or truth such as it is in heaven; and He glorified His humanity when He made it Divine truth such as is above heaven, yea, far above all heavens, when He entered into the light that no man can approach unto.

Such are the spiritual and Divine subjects treated of in the history of the first three kings of Israel, which it will be my endeavour, with Divine assistance, to trace in the inspired record of their successive reigns.

CHAPTER I.

SAUL SENT IN SEARCH OF HIS FATHER'S ASSES.

1 Samuel ix. 1-14.

THE Divine Being having consented to the request of the people to have a king, His Providence led to the selection of one who, His wisdom saw, was best suited to the people and the times, and, in a higher sense, to the representative character he was to sustain.

Saul, the son of Kish, a Benjamite, was sent by his father in quest of his asses, which were lost. When, after a long and diligent but unsuccessful search, Saul proposed to return, his servant advised him to consult the prophet. Meanwhile Samuel was divinely informed of Saul's coming, and was instructed what to do. The result was that Samuel anointed Saul to be captain over the Lord's inheritance.

The narrative is singularly interesting, as showing the manner and

means, direct and indirect, natural and supernatural, by which Providence effects its purposes. But it is instructive as well as interesting, as teaching us the ways of God, in so ordering the outward events of Bible history as to be typical of divine and spiritual things. In this light we propose to consider the narrative before us.

The first particular we notice is that the first king of Israel was taken from the tribe of Benjamin, as the second was from the tribe of Judah, the descendants of the last and the first of the sons of Israel, not in the order of birth but of rank, as expressed, for example, in the sealing of the twelve tribes in the Book of Revelation (vii. 3-8), these representing the last and the first of the principles that constitute the kingdom of God, and, in the highest sense, that were assumed and glorified in the humanity of the Lord. The first and the last include in their representation all that come between. Judah and Benjamin thus include the whole of the twelve tribes of Israel, which represented all the principles of goodness and truth that constitute the Church. These the Lord assumed and glorified in the world; for the principles of goodness and truth constitute humanity. Man is not human from his shape, but from those qualities that make him a moral image of his Maker. When the Lord became incarnate human nature had lost the moral image of God. But the principles that constituted humanity, though perverted, were not utterly destroyed; and the Lord assumed the perverted forms of humanity, and by glorification restored them to their true order, and ultimately made them Divine. By incarnation the Lord became man in ultimates, but the ultimate humanity which He assumed and glorified includes all that was represented by David and Solomon as well as by Saul, and by Judah as well as by Benjamin. It was from the tribe of Benjamin that the first king of Israel was chosen, to teach us that the foundation of the Lord's kingdom is to be laid in the lowest degree of goodness and truth, and is to ascend gradually and successively till it reaches the highest.

But the Divine history does not at once introduce Saul to our notice, but first makes us acquainted with Kish, his father, as it afterwards does with David, of whom we first hear through his father Jesse. There was in ancient times a natural reason for knowing the son through the father; but there is a spiritual reason also. Father and son in Scripture signify goodness and truth. Other related pairs have the same meaning, but in a different connection. A father means good from which truth is derived, and a son means truth derived from good. This is the meaning of Father and Son in relation to the Lord Himself. The Father is the Divine goodness, the Son is the Divine truth; for truth comes from goodness as a son from a father. In no other sense than this are a Divine Father and a Divine Son possible. The father of Saul is first introduced to us for the purpose of instruct-

ing us respecting the nature of the good from which the truth represented by Saul was derived. It is not always easy to see in the natural meaning of a name the spiritual meaning of him who bears it; but the description of the typical man is always a sufficient guide. Kish was a mighty man of power. The word rendered power sometimes means wealth, which seems suitable here. But even when two words signifying power come together, one means the power of good, and the other the power of truth. Neither of them has any power by itself, but in union with the other; for good has no power but by truth, and truth has no power but from good. Yet the distinction is not lost. There are two kinds of power, power of will and power of intellect; but the will can do nothing without the intellect, and the intellect can do nothing without the will. There is this possibility however: the will may be stronger than the intellect, and the intellect may be stronger than the will; and in either case the result is imperfection of character. When the will is stronger than the intellect, there is defect of judgment; when the intellect is stronger than the will, there is defect of conscientiousness. The balance of the two and their united action make the perfect man. This balance and union seem to be expressed in Kish being a mighty man of power.

But not only is Kish himself introduced into the narrative, but his progenitors to the fourth generation are brought before us. And these four prior generations point to the same balance and union which are expressed in the description of Kish himself; because four, like two, signifies conjunction. The names of these men might afford a basis for their spiritual meaning if we had time and space to devote to the inquiry. There is one at least so evidently significant that we cannot pass it over. The father of Kish was named Abiel. This name is compounded of two words, Abi, father, and El, God. The principle of good, we have seen, is meant by father, and the principle of truth is meant by the Divine name El. There are two general names by which the Divine Being is spoken of in the Old Testament—Jehovah and Elohim. Jehovah is the name so familiar to us in our English Bible as LORD, and Elohim is that which is still more familiar to us as God; and these two sacred names are expressive of the two essentials of the Divine nature, love and wisdom, or goodness and truth. El is a contraction of the name Elohim, and when it forms a part, as it frequently does, of the proper names of men or angels, it is understood to mean power, so that Abiel signifies a powerful father; but as it literally is made up of the two words father and God, in the spiritual sense it is expressive, as we have seen, of good and truth combined, and of the power of good by truth. Such, then, was the "root" of Saul, the first king of Israel. And the son of Kish, all unconscious as yet of the dignity that awaits him, is now placed before us.

Saul is described as "a choice young man, and a goodly ; and there was not among the children of Israel a goodlier person than he : from the shoulders and upward he was higher than any of the people." Choice and goodly would have been better fair and good ; in which predication we see again the true and the good combined. Among the sons of Israel there was none so goodly as he. Of all the truths of heaven and the Church, there was none equal in goodness to that which was to become by assumption and glorification the regal principle of the Lord. But Saul was not only fair and good : he was tall : from his shoulders upward he was higher than any of the people. The same Scripture term that means of great stature means also high-minded, and this is frequently its spiritual meaning also ; but this cannot be included in its meaning here. Saul afterwards, indeed, became high-minded ; but he is credited with having been, at the time he was appointed king, little in his own sight (xv. 17). His great stature must therefore represent that which in the true sense is spiritually expressed by height, a high degree of goodness and truth according to the degrees which, in the Writings, are called degrees of altitude, those which do not increase or diminish by imperceptible gradations, but which pass into and are distinguished from each other by distinct lines of demarcation, as thought passes into speech, and will into action. Such are the degrees by which the whole heaven is distinguished into three particular heavens. These three heavens are not separate, but they are distinct. They have each a character distinct from, but in harmony with, the whole ; yet each within itself consists of degrees that pass into each other by imperceptible gradations. We see something like this in the rainbow, where there are several distinct colours, and yet the celestial arc consists of an infinite number and variety of hues, which shade off by continuous, and pass into distinct degrees ; so that we have there every different colour and every different shade of each. If we consider Saul as representing the Divine truth in heaven, which constituted the Lord's humanity before He came into the world, we may, I think, see an exalted meaning in this circumstance respecting Saul's stature. The Lord's Divine truth as it flowed into the intellect of the angels assumed a human form. In their minds it was finited, and there existed according to their finite and imperfect conception of its meaning. This was the truth Divine in heaven which the Lord in descending through heaven assumed, and which He made Divine truth, and finally Divine good, by glorification in the world. But before the Lord came into the world there were not three distinct heavens as there are now. Then only one heaven, which is now the highest, existed actually. This was formed from those who constituted the Adamic Church. The other heavens, indeed, although they did

not exist actually, existed potentially. Those who could be raised into heaven after the fall of the Most Ancient Church, of whom the highest or celestial heaven, then the only one, consisted, formed the external of that heaven. These formed the nucleus of the second or spiritual heaven. But those of whom this heaven, as well as the first or lowest heaven, were subsequently to consist, existed and were accumulating in the world of spirits ; but not until the Lord had assumed and glorified humanity in the world could the spiritual who formed the external of the celestial heaven, and the spiritual in the world of spirits, be formed into a distinct kingdom. I am here anticipating a subject that will engage our attention when we come to the division of the Israelitish kingdom into the two kingdoms of Judah and Israel, by the revolt of the ten tribes under Jeroboam, which I think it interesting and useful to include in our explanation. Something on the subject is necessary to be premised as an introduction to the study of Saul's stature. Saul, it seems to me, represented truth Divine, or the Lord's humanity as existing in the heaven actually formed, while the "sons of Israel" or "the people" represented those in the spiritual world, who as yet formed no part of the heaven then actually existing ; for the Lord came to save the spiritual, as well those in the spiritual as in the natural world.

Heaven, regarded as a whole, forms the Grand Man, the most perfect image of the Divine Man. Of this man the highest heaven forms the head, the second the body, and the lowest the extremities. Before the formation and actual existence of the lower heavens this Grand Man did exist in the same fulness as after that great event. Yet heaven is not to be thought of as being then as a head without a body. The lower heavens existed, as I have said, potentially though not actually. Besides, every particular heaven is in the human form, as is indeed every particular society as well as every particular angel : for heaven is an image of the Lord in the whole and in every part ; the difference being that the image is the more perfect the more numerous and diversified the parts that constitute it. As the formation and growth of heaven have been necessarily similar to, and contemporaneous with, the beginning and progress of the human race, and both have been like those of the individual man, some idea of the general subject may be acquired by studying the particular. In the formation of the human being, as an embryo and a fœtus, the central and higher parts are formed first, and the surrounding and lower parts are gradually formed later. Yet all the parts are there from the beginning, but lie undeveloped till the formative power brings them from potential into actual existence. Saul, from the shoulders upward higher than any of the people, presents an image of heaven, which formed the Lord's humanity before He came into the world, as it

stood above all those who were yet in the middle state, and who waited for deliverance by the incarnate God, as the people looked for deliverance by the king whom they desired. The shoulders, too, are the emblems of power, and the head of wisdom; so that the terms in which Saul's extraordinary and unequalled height is expressed are designed to instruct us that although the Lord assumed our common nature, He transcended all men in power and wisdom, even when His humanity was as yet but truth Divine, such as it was among the angels, for among men even such truth had ceased to exist.

Having considered the lineage and character of Saul, so far at least as respects his personal appearance, which had then much to do with a man's fitness for the office of a king, we now turn our attention to the circumstances by which he was led to the goal which Providence designed he should reach.

"The asses of Kish, Saul's father, were lost: and Kish said to Saul his son, Take now one of the servants with thee, and arise, go seek the asses." Saul when seeking the asses found a kingdom. Another particular we may here remark in again comparing Saul with David. Saul was called to the throne of Israel when in search of his father's asses; David was called to the throne when keeping his father's sheep. This marks an important difference between the representative character of the two men, as called to the same regal function. According to Scripture analogy, the ass is an emblem of that which belongs to natural thought, while the sheep is an emblem of that which belongs to spiritual affection. The ass, which with us is degraded and contemned, was with Orientals in ancient times honoured and esteemed. Among the Israelites the sons of judges rode upon asses, and the sons of kings upon mules; and the Lord Jesus made His last triumphal entry into Jerusalem riding upon an ass, and upon a colt, the foal of an ass. In that act, which had even been the subject of prophecy, He represented that in His humanity things natural were now brought into entire subordination and obedience to things rational, spiritual, celestial, and divine. In the case of Saul the asses were lost; and that which was spiritually represented by them was lost, till it was found by our Lord when He came into the world to save that which was lost, and the recovery of which was represented by the finding of the ass and its colt on which He rode. For He sent two of His disciples to a village where they were to find the ass and its colt tied, and which they were to obtain by merely telling the owner that the Lord had need of them. Generally, the lost are represented by the sheep, for which the shepherd seeks till he finds it. But when we know that the lost mean not only lost persons but lost principles, we can see a propriety in these being spoken under the symbols of different animals, as the emblems of different principles or

qualities. For persons are lost by their losing the graces and virtues which can save them. The Lord saves His people by restoring to them that which they have lost. When He brings back to them the knowledge and faith represented by the ass and her colt, and the charity represented by the sheep, He saves them, by restoring to them the graces and virtues in which is salvation. "*That* which was lost," which the Son of Man came to save (Matt. xviii. 11), is neuter, so that literally it refers not to persons, but to things. The saving of persons is indeed the end, but the restoring of saving qualities is the means, and the indispensable means, of their salvation.

In his search for his father's asses Saul passed through Mount Ephraim, and through the land of Shalisha, and through the land of Shalim, and through the land of the Benjamites, and found them not. The search was made in the three contiguous provinces of Ephraim, Dan, and Benjamin. The tribes of Israel represented all the principles of goodness and truth that constitute the Church. The three tribes, over whose land Saul's search extended, all belong to the intellectual class, having relation to truth rather than to good. Judah, which represented the highest principle of good, though contiguous to Benjamin, was not visited. The three particular places, two of which Saul passed through, are, rather singularly, not mentioned in any other part of the Bible. The first and last were in the land of Ephraim, the other was in the land of Dan. Shalim means a place of foxes, Shalisha expresses its triangular shape, and Zuph signifies sweet, honey as dropping from the comb. Shalim is the natural will, Shalisha the natural understanding, and Zuph natural delight, or what the natural man would call good, and truth, and the pleasantness resulting from them. But the asses are not found there. There is nothing of a saving quality in anything merely natural.

It is not said that Saul passed through Zuph, but that when he came to it he said to his servant, "Come, and let us return; lest my father leave caring for the asses, and take thought for us." He had now, however, been led providentially to the city of the prophet; and the servant proposed they should go and inquire of him as to the way they should go. Where natural delight terminates spiritual delight begins. When our best natural efforts to recover that which is lost prove unsuccessful, we are in a state of mind to turn our thoughts and direct our efforts into a new and higher channel. When the natural fails we are better prepared to turn to the supernatural. When our own intelligence and prudence are found to leave our desires unsatisfied and our object unattained, we are more ready to place our reliance on the wisdom and providence of God; and only need some friendly voice, either from within or from without, to direct us to the true Source of our help and happiness.

But we must remember that those only are likely to obey that voice who, while they are pursuing and seeking a worthy object, such as the knowledge of the truth, by the seemingly unaided efforts of their own understanding, have yet been secretly influenced and guided by the Lord. All whose motives are good are acting under Divine influence; and they will sooner or later be brought to the city of the seer, who will reveal to them how they have been divinely led, and led to a higher good than they themselves have been pursuing, or even could have conceived as their portion.

The servant's description of Samuel is that of a true prophet, and applies eminently to the One whom every true prophet represented. "There is in this city a man of God, and he is an honourable man: all that he saith cometh surely to pass." He is a man of God who is a man of truth, and he is an honourable man who is a man of love. These two united make the true prophet, or the seer, as a prophet was first and at the time called. A seer is one who foresees and provides; a prophet is one who foretells and teaches. Foreseeing and providing come before and are within foretelling and teaching; as the internal comes before and is within the external. Such a one is, above all, *THE PROPHET*; and he can show us our way that we should go.

When the servant proposed going to the seer, Saul said, "But, behold . . . what shall we bring the man? for the bread is spent in our vessels, and there is not a present to bring to the man of God: what have we?" The gifts with which prophets were propitiated were symbols of the gifts which God requires of those who come to seek His favour and obtain His blessing. They are their good affections and true thoughts. These are to be devoted and offered to God, for they are the channels through which His gifts descend to them. The first and best of these gifts were represented by bread, and by the meat-offerings which were placed on the altar. Bread was one of the gifts which David presented to Saul when first introduced to him (1 Sam. xvi. 19). But in times of travail this bread of life is often spent in our vessel; and when we would come into the Divine Presence we feel or fear we have nothing to offer. This consciousness of poverty is itself a virtue, for blessed are the poor in spirit. If there is nothing to offer there can be at least no claim of merit. But in the present case there is not absolute destitution. The servant has the fourth part of a shekel of silver. If the good is spent, there are still some remains of truth. A shekel was twenty gerahs (Exod. xxx. 13); half a shekel was given by every Israelite when the people were numbered, as a sign that none but those who have the ten gerahs of remains can be numbered with the spiritual Israel of the Lord. Five as well as ten is the symbol of remains, but in a less degree. If one have the five

gerahs or the quarter shekel, even this will be the means of obtaining admission to the house of the seer.

When Saul and his servant "went unto the city where the man of God was, as they went up the hill to the city, they found young maidens going to draw water, and he said unto them, Is the seer here? And they answered them, and said, He is : behold, he is before you : make haste now, for he came to-day to the city ; for there is a sacrifice of the people to-day in the high place. As soon as ye go up to the city ye shall straightway find him, before he go up to the high place to eat ; for the people will not eat until he come, because he doth bless the sacrifice, and afterwards they eat that be bidden. Now therefore get you up, for about this time ye shall find him." In this charming picture we get a lifelike view of the simple manners of the time, and of the character of those social sacrificial feasts that we read of, but never see described, in the Levitical law. The spiritual meaning is not less interesting, and is much more instructive. Those young maidens are the affections of truth going with joy to draw water out of the wells of salvation (Isa. xii. 3). These wells, or rather fountains, are in the Holy Word, whence those who have a pure and single love of truth draw living water for the uses of spiritual life. In this divinely-ordered history these young maidens are a part of the provided means for securing the appointed end. To them the inquiry is rightly addressed whether the seer is here ; and from them the information rightly comes that he is, with particular directions where and when he may be found. First the inquirers are exhorted to make haste ; for haste is an effort, and therefore a sign of eager desire, which lies at the foundation of all true progress and of ultimate success. The reasons for haste are, that the seer is before them, and that he may be found before he goes up to the high place to eat. The occasion of the seer's visit was the celebration of a sacrifice of the people. These social feasts were representative of the conjunction of the people with the Lord and with each other. They thus represented the spiritual feasts of love and charity—love to the Lord and charity to the neighbour. And this was a fitting occasion for the reception and inauguration of the new king, who was to be a representative of the Lord as a ruler of His people, but who was required to rule by truth from love. He therefore ought to have a part in the feast ; and as he was to be a guest of the seer, as one of them that be bidden, it was requisite that he should see him before the feast began, that the prophet, and the future king, and the people, might unite in celebrating this great religious symbol of worship and unity. The high place where the sacrifice was to be made, before it had been profaned and had acquired a profane meaning by idolatrous worship, was symbolic of the exalted views and feelings from which the Divine Being, who was

also called the Highest, and who dwelt in the high and holy place, was to be worshipped. To this Saul was to go up by the direction of the prophet, whom he was exhorted to meet, and whom he met in the city ; that he might, under the guidance of the seer, ascend from the doctrine to the love of goodness and truth.

CHAPTER II.

SAMUEL RECEIVES AND ENTERTAINS SAUL.

1 *Samuel* ix. 15-27.

WHEN Saul and his servant were come into the city Samuel was coming out. They were personally unknown to each other, but the seer, who had previously been divinely warned of Saul's coming, now received the intimation that the man before him was he whom he was to anoint captain over the Lord's people, to save them out of the hand of the Philistines, because their cry had come up to Him. We now for the first time learn the special reason on which the Divine Being acted in granting Israel a king. It was not merely to please His people, but to save them from their enemies. Those enemies were such as required a king to oppose them. The nations of Canaan represented the different evil and false principles against which the Church has to contend. The Philistines, those powerful and determined foes of Israel, represented one of the most formidable and persistent of the false principles that the Church in all ages has suffered from and has had to war against, but which she has often shamefully yielded to. They represented the false principle or persuasion, that men can be saved by knowing and believing without loving and doing, which may be briefly expressed as salvation by faith alone. Considered as it is in its own nature, faith alone is a false persuasion grounded in evil, for it originates in it as well as leads to it. The opposite of that falsity is truth grounded in goodness, and this was represented by a king. The Philistines had troubled Israel under the Judges ; and even Samson, the greatest of her heroes, had not only failed to subdue them, but had been bound and blinded by them, and compelled to grind in their prison, and make sport for the multitude ; thus symbolizing how the votaries of faith alone bind the truth that should make men free, and put out the eyes of the understanding that should be their guide, and make it grind at their intellectual mill by making it reason in favour of error, and compel it to make sport for the gratification of their corrupt affections. But Samson was single-handed. Saul was to be

captain over the Lord's people, and lead them out to battle. And that which made him a king made Israel a kingdom ; so that the people with their leader became, representatively, the opposite of that which was represented by the Philistines and their sovereign.

When Saul, in whom the prophet now beheld the future king of Israel, "drew near to Samuel in the gate, he said, Tell me, I pray thee, where the seer's house is." Unlike Samuel, the son of Kish had received no revelation, so that he knew not whom he was addressing. In spiritual things the higher knows the lower when the lower knows not the higher ; for influx enters the inner man and passes thence into the outer man. This, at least, is the case when the gate of the rational mind, by which the spiritual mind communicates with the natural, and the natural with the spiritual, is open, and when the spiritual is looking outward and the natural is looking inward, and when they are approaching each other, and finally meet in this middle region, as Saul and Samuel met in the gate. When the natural thus desires to obtain access to the spiritual, and especially to know the good in which internal truth resides, as Saul wished to know where the house of the prophet was, then the internal man reveals himself. To Saul's question Samuel answered, "I am the seer." Having communicated this simple fact respecting himself, and directed Saul to go up before him unto the high place, for he must eat with him that day, he amazed his visitor by announcing to him that on the morrow he would tell him all that was in his heart, that the asses which were lost three days ago were found, and that he it was on whom was the desire of Israel, and on all his father's house. This miraculous knowledge is the symbol of a spiritual truth. The spiritual mind knows all that pertains to the natural. "What man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him?" The fulness of time and of state, of which three days are the common symbol, sees that restored which was lost ; and truth Divine, with all the good belonging to it, becomes the desire of the common principles of the mind, as their ruling power.

With becoming modesty, expressive of humility, Saul deprecates the honour so unexpectedly thrust upon him. "Am not I a Benjamite, of the smallest of the tribes of Israel? and my family the least of all the families of the tribe of Benjamin? wherefore speakest thou so to me?" The circumstances which made Saul think himself the least worthy of the high station assigned him, were the very circumstances which made him the subject of the Divine choice. "God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things that are mighty ; that no flesh should glory in His presence." It is not to magnify His own power, and prevent men from robbing Him of His glory, that the Lord thus acts ; it is because self-sufficiency impedes the Divine

operation, and defeats the best efforts of men in the cause of truth and righteousness.

There is perhaps something of the Oriental style in Saul's description of his tribe and family, a style which is well adapted to express the sense of one's own nothingness, or the utter abnegation of the selfhood, which all ought to feel, and the language of which forms so perfect a basis for the spiritual sense. It is possible that after the terrible slaughter of the Benjamites in the time of the Judges their tribe was now the smallest, though it was not so in the time of Joshua ; but the description of Kish as a mighty man of power did not seem to indicate that his was actually the least of all the families of Benjamin.

Samuel now took Saul and his servant and brought them into the parlour, and made them sit in the chiefest place among them that were bidden, which were about thirty persons. The room into which they were brought had no doubt more of a sacred character than the homely name given to it would seem to imply. This is the only instance in which the word is translated parlour, but it appears repeatedly in our version as a chamber, and especially a chamber of the temple. One of the chambers of the mystic temple was for the priests, the keepers of the charge of the house, and one was for the priests, the keepers of the charge of the altar (Ezek. xl. 45, 46) ; and we learn from Nehemiah that in one chamber they laid the offerings which the Law required the people to bring for the priests, the Levites, and the singers (xiii. 5). The chamber into which Saul was brought was in the high place, where sacrifices were offered as well as eaten ; it therefore was a holy place, where he was to sit down with holy men, to partake of a holy feast. There is such a chamber now as there was then, into which none enter but divinely-bidden guests, where none but sacrificial feasts are eaten, and only holy intercourse takes place. That chamber is in the inner man, into which evil never penetrates, but where holy affections and thoughts, which the Lord has introduced, combine to exalt His name and rejoice in His bounty. Into this we consciously enter when raised above the cares of the world. And in the case here represented, that truth which is to rule over the common affections and thoughts is set in the chiefest place, even among the principles of the inner man. Those among whom Saul occupied the chief place were about thirty persons. This, like all numbers in the Word, was symbolic. Thirty is a highly significant number. It includes in its meaning the beginning of a new state and the nature of the state begun—fulness of remains with conflict. The Levites were thirty years of age when they entered on the work of their ministry, which is also called a warfare ; David was thirty years old when he began to reign ; and the Lord Himself began to be about thirty years of age when He entered on His public ministry. In all these cases there was preparation

before and conflict after. In Saul's case the number was not of years, but of persons. These persons are new affections and thoughts, and the acquisition of these is truly the entering on a new state, too surely to be followed by conflict. At present, however, all was to Saul new and elevating. Samuel, forewarned of the guest he was to entertain, had caused a shoulder to be reserved for him, and he now asked the cook to set it before him; and Saul did eat with Samuel that day. It was the custom in those times to mark a distinguished guest both by the quantity and quality of the meat that was set before him. When Joseph entertained his brethren, Benjamin's mess was five times as much as any of theirs. The shoulder which had been set aside for Saul was a distinguished portion. By the Levitical law the shoulder was that part of the wave-offering which was given to Aaron and his sons, as the breast was given to Moses (Exod. xxix. 26, 27), because the shoulder signified love, and the breast charity. In the case of Saul the setting before him of that priestly portion had, besides, a special symbolism; it was an expressive sign that the government of Israel was now about to pass from the priest to the king. The idea of government is also included in the meaning of the shoulder, for it includes the idea of power, which is evident from the well-known passage relating to the Lord Himself, "The government shall be upon His shoulder." Samuel, when Saul did eat with him that day, must have recognised in the circumstance the transfer of his own authority to his guest. Samuel was a prophet and a judge, and he was now at least officiating as a priest, which some assert he actually was. If we accept Chronicles as an historical record he belonged at any rate to the tribe of Levi (1 Chron. vi. 16, 28), though not to the priestly caste.

When the festival was concluded Samuel and Saul came down from the high place unto the city. Every actual elevation of the mind to God is followed by a coming down to the affairs of men. From the high place to the city is not less necessary than from the city to the high place. We worship God that we may be strengthened to do our duty to men. It is thus we truly serve God. "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these, ye have done it unto Me." But although Samuel and Saul had come down from the chamber in the high place to the house in the city, they went up to the top of the house, and there communed on the all-important matters relating to the kingdom which was now about to be commenced. They not only communed on high subjects, but they spoke of them from high or interior states of mind. Exalted motives and exalted views were only suitable in men who discoursed on so high a topic as that which concerned the welfare of a people, elected by the grace of God to preserve the knowledge of His name and the purity of His worship amidst nations sunk into the grossest idolatry and practising the impure rites. Samuel no

doubt fulfilled his promise by telling Saul all that was in his heart ; and while he let in the light of truth upon his mind, to show him what manner of man he was, he, we may be sure, counselled him how to govern so great a people, to govern in the strength and for the glory of Him who was their true King and supreme Ruler. And such is the case with the least of us when the Divine Prophet, either by His Word or His Spirit, communes with us respecting our own secret thoughts, and instructs us concerning the government of His kingdom in our own hearts and minds.

So closed the eventful day. On the morrow "they arose early : and it came to pass, about the spring of the day, that Samuel called Saul to the top of the house, saying, Up, that I may send thee away. And Saul arose, and they went out both of them, he and Samuel, abroad." If, as competent critics assert, the word here translated "arose in the morning" originally meant to place a load on the shoulders, to load an animal preparatory to a journey, it may well be said of Saul that he arose on the morning of this new day with the burden of a kingdom upon his shoulder. It is when we first awake in the morning after the day of a great change that a sense of our altered circumstances comes most forcibly upon us. But Saul was not only to revive a former impression ; he was to receive a new one. Yesterday he knew himself as the chosen, to-day he is to know himself as the anointed, of the Lord. Inauguration into his high office is to make him for the time at least a new man. This new day is truly the beginning of a new state. All that is related of the day indicates this. Samuel and Saul arose early, while it was yet dark it would seem ; for about the spring of the day, or early dawn, Samuel called Saul to the top of the house, saying, Up, that I may send thee away. Early morning and dawn mean the beginning of a new state, but they express besides something of its nature. Nor do they symbolize that state only when Divine light breaks in anew upon the mind, but the inward tranquillity and peace which the dawn usually brings with it. In the supreme sense the dawn signifies the Lord Himself, the Sun of Righteousness. He is said to rise early, and send His servants the prophets ; and His coming is always connected with the morning, and is compared to the dawn. In a lower and general sense the dawn is the commencement of a new church ; in a particular sense the dawn is regeneration, for when any one is made new the Lord's kingdom arises in him, and he becomes a church ; in the singular sense it is the dawn as often as the good of love and of faith is operative in him, for in this is the Lord's coming. It was when the dawn had ended His successful wrestling with the angel that Jacob's name was changed to Israel ; as it is when the Christian disciple overcomes in temptation : he passes out of a natural into a spiritual state. At the dawn Samuel called Saul to

the top of the house, again representing elevation of mind ; but this time it is not to commune with him, but to send him away, to speed him on his journey to his father's house, with the seal of his appointment to the regal office. They then went forth abroad. To go forth abroad is to proceed from internal to external things, or to carry inward principles into outward acts. "As they were going down to the end of the city, Samuel said to Saul, Bid the servant pass on before us, (and he passed on,) but stand thou still a while, that I may show thee the word of God." Saul first met Samuel at the gate of the city, and Samuel was to dismiss Saul at its termination. But how different the circumstances ! how much had taken place between his entrance and his departure ! So the circle of life returns into itself ; but how great the difference of state between its beginning and its end ! It was when they were approaching the end of the city that Samuel desired Saul to stand still that he might show him the word of God. Like the command to the Israelites, "Stand still, and see the salvation of God," and the exhortation, "Be still, and know that I am God," this is a command to cease from all activity originating in self, and place entire reliance upon God. The meaning is expressed by the Lord Himself where He says to the people, "In quietness and confidence shall be your strength ;" and where the prophet says of them, "Their strength is to sit still" (Isa. xxx. 7, 15). But sitting has relation to a state of the will and of love, and standing to a state of the understanding and of faith ; it is this stillness, therefore, that Samuel requires of Saul. It is this standing still from the activity of our own intellectual selfhood that enables us to receive the word of God in faith ; for true faith is trust in God, as able to do for us more and better for us than we can do for ourselves. It is this also which prepares us for the sanctification which the anointing of Saul by the prophet represented ; for it was to anoint him as the king of Israel that he required him to stand still. This subject is treated of in the next chapter.

CHAPTER III.

SAUL ANOINTED KING, WITH SIGNS FOLLOWING.

1 Samuel x.

WHEN Saul stood still, "then Samuel took a vial of oil, and poured it upon his head, and kissed him, and said, Is it not because the Lord hath anointed thee to be captain over His inheritance ?" As a cere-

monial, anointing was a sign of the inauguration of a person into a particular office, or the dedication of a thing to a particular purpose. Not only were priests and kings anointed, but even the particular instruments of their service—the vessels of the temple and the instruments of war. This general unction was designed to teach us an important truth. Oil is in Scripture the symbol of love. A very striking and obvious illustration of this meaning of oil is afforded in the parable of the Ten Virgins, when they went out to meet the bridegroom. The five wise virgins took oil in their vessels with their lamps ; but the foolish took their lamps, indeed, but they took no oil ; so that when, at midnight, the cry arose, “ Behold the bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet him,” the wise, whose lamps were burning, went in with him to the marriage, while the foolish, whose lamps were gone out, being unable to follow, were shut out. Love is the life of faith, as oil is of the flame ; but when there is no love there is not even faith ; for the light of the foolish virgins had gone out, and they were left with the empty lamp of mere knowledge. Anointing in the Israelitish Church represented that persons enter actually into a holy state, and are devoted to a holy use, when they receive into their hearts the love of God and act under its influence.

But all the anointings that took place in the shadowy dispensation of the Jews, especially of priests and kings, were representative of the anointing of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, as the Priest and King, of whom all their priests and kings were types. As a typical act this ceremonial had, in reference to our Lord, the highest and the holiest significance ; and it gave Him the title of the Messiah and the Christ, which signify the Anointed. In His case, however, anointing was a purely Divine act. He was anointed with the oil of Divine love. The Lord was manifested in the world as Divine truth ; He was the Word made flesh. Divine truth was the Son ; Divine love was the Father. The glorification of the Lord, by which He became the Anointed, consisted in His uniting Divine love with Divine truth in His humanity, so that His humanity became the infinite form of Divine love and Divine wisdom ; and He, in His own Divine Person, became, and now is, both Father and Son ; all the fulness of the Godhead dwelling bodily in Him.

The Lord's glorification is the pattern or archetype of human regeneration. As He made His humanity Divine by uniting Divine love and Divine truth in Himself, He makes His disciples spiritual by conjoining love and truth in their minds and lives. Truth they acquire from revelation, thus from without ; love they can only acquire by inspiration, thus from within, or from above. It is love that makes us the children of God. Truth is indeed necessary, because without truth we could not know what love is, nor who and what we ought to

love ; but truth must be anointed and sanctified with the holy oil of love before it can become holy in the mind of him who has acquired it, or be employed in the actual performance of holy uses. In the inauguration of one who was to be the ruler of the Lord's heritage, the ceremonial of anointing was the more necessary, because it was expressive of the law of Divine order, that the truth which governs in the Church and in the minds of its members must be grounded in love. The first reception of love in truth is the actual commencement of spiritual life in the soul, for love is life ; it is that which enkindles in our hearts a real desire to do the Lord's will, and affects it with true joy and delight in doing it. When truth, which we have acquired from the written Word, has become joined to love, which we have received from the glorified incarnate Word, then is fulfilled that prophetic saying of the inspired Psalmist, "Truth shall spring out of the earth ; and righteousness shall look down from heaven ;" and that declaration is also realized, "Mercy and truth are met together : righteousness and peace have kissed each other" (Ps. lxxxv. 10, 11). The kiss, which is the Scripture symbol of conjunction by love, and in the best sense the conjunction of truth and love, is that which Samuel bestowed upon Saul when he had poured the vial of oil upon his head : for Samuel, as the anointing priest, and Saul, as the anointed king, now represented, more perfectly than before, the two kindred principles of love and truth, of charity and faith. Had this union ever afterwards continued and increased, both the king and the kingdom would have been more prosperous and happy, and the aged prophet would have escaped much bitterness of spirit. Yet those unhappy changes that passed over the spirit and disfigured the reign of Saul, are but too faithful symbols of vicissitudes in the Christian life, and even of trials and temptations of the Lord Himself as truth Divine, thus as the Son of Man during that early experience, when His visage was so marred more than any man, when He had no form nor comeliness, and there was no beauty that we should desire Him. But it is carefully to be observed that, while the typical characters who represented the Lord committed sins, and in some instances grievous sins, their sins only represented His temptations, not temptations to commit the sins themselves which they committed, but the evils too deep to be seen by the human eye, and even too mysterious to be comprehended by the finite mind, in which the sins of men originate. The Lord's temptations had therefore a depth and intensity of which we can have no adequate conception.

Before Samuel had sent away Saul he told him of three signs that were to follow in confirmation of the Lord's having chosen and anointed him to be captain over His inheritance. These are still

among the signs that follow them that believe, and to these we must now turn our attention.

When Saul was departed he was to find two men by Rachel's sepulchre, who should tell him that the asses which he sought were found. This was appropriate in the case of Saul, but it is as significant in relation to those whom Saul represented. Rachel was the mother of Benjamin, the father of the tribe to which Saul belonged. She was the first and best beloved, though not the first obtained, of Jacob's two wives. She represented the spiritual affection of truth, Leah her elder sister representing the natural affection. Rachel died in giving birth to Benjamin while Jacob was journeying from Padan-aram to Canaan. Bethlehem-Ephratah, the scene of this affecting and significant event, is distinguished in sacred prophecy and history as the birthplace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Sovereign and Saviour of the world. And on the massacre of the innocents by Herod, in the hope of destroying Him who was said to be born King of the Jews, Rachel is represented as weeping for her children, and refusing to be comforted, because they were not, the prophet thus describing the despairing grief of the Church over its innocence destroyed, except in Him and by whom it was to be restored. The death and burial of Rachel at the birthplace of Benjamin did not represent the extinction and rejection of that affection of which she was the type, but its resurrection into newness of life. For as, when the body dies and is buried, the soul enters on a new and higher state of existence, death and burial signify resurrection ; and spiritual resurrection is regeneration, which is entrance into life. Saul's first sign occurring at Rachel's sepulchre is a sign to us that regeneration enters on its first stage of development, when the spiritual affection of truth first puts off the old man and puts on the new. This state is further described by this first sign taking place when Saul came to Rachel's sepulchre on the border of Benjamin at Zelzah. The land of Benjamin, like Benjamin himself, represented the good of truth, or truth in act ; for when man in the progress of vital religion enters practically on the life of truth from love, he enters into the new or heavenly state. Of Zelzah we know nothing besides its situation but the name. Its verbal meaning, a shade from the heat of the sun, shows it to be expressive of a state continuous with that, the commencement of which was represented by the dawn of the day, when Samuel called Saul to the housetop to send him away, but a state rather of love than of light, or one in which good has been added to truth. The sign itself which was here given him was a double proof of Samuel's character as a seer ; but it is expressive of a spiritual truth relating to the stage of spiritual progress now represented. Saul was to find two men who should say to him, "The asses which thou wentest to seek are found : and, lo, thy father

hath left the care of the asses, and sorroweth for you, saying, What shall I do for my son?" Saul's searching for asses and finding a kingdom presents a striking natural antithesis; but the former announcement, that what he had lost was found, is the point we are to observe, and in connection with it the father's sorrowing for his son. We have already said that in the highest sense Saul's search for the lost asses represents the Lord's coming to seek that which was lost; and in seeking for the lost He also found a kingdom. Yet Saul himself did not recover the asses; so that the analogy between his seeking and the Saviour's may seem not to hold good, nor are we told by whom they were restored, and this is a matter of important significance. There is a profound as well as a superficial correspondence between the type and the antitype in the Holy Word. There is an internal and invisible as well as an external and visible finding. The faithful were internally restored and conjoined to the Father before they were fully and finally redeemed by the Son. The Lord glorified His humanity in the same order in which He regenerates man. His internal man was, therefore, glorified before His external. These were distinct or discreted acts. Reference is made to them in the Father's answer to the Son's prayer, "Father, glorify Thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again" (John xii. 28). Simultaneous with the internal glorification of the Lord's humanity was the internal redemption of the human race, and of the angelic heaven, and more immediately of the faithful in the middle state, who were thereby internally conjoined to the Father, or to the Lord's internal man; for the Father dwelt within Him. Jesus therefore speaks of His people being already in His Father's possession and in His own before the work of redemption was accomplished. "I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any *man* pluck them out of My hand. My Father, which gave them Me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of My Father's hand. I and My Father are one" (John x. 28-30). This oneness of the Father and the Son was as yet only internal. Like Kish and Saul at this juncture, they were internally united, but externally apart. The complete union of the Father and the Son, or the Divinity and Humanity, was yet to be effected by direful temptations, the last of which was the passion of the cross; and it was in these that the Father sorrowed for His Son. Jesus was a Man of Sorrows. We do not read of the Father sorrowing; nay, we do not read of the Son of God sorrowing, but only of the Son of Man. Only Patripassians supposed the Divinity to suffer. Such images only express representatively the sympathy of the Divinity with the Humanity, or of the Father with the Son in His sufferings.

In reference to the regeneration of man, the asses signify the lowest

truths, which belong to the memory, while Saul represents the higher truth, that belongs to the understanding. The wandering of the asses from the fields of Kish is expressive of the separation of these lowest truths from connection with the good to which they belong, of which Saul's father is the type; and the finding of the asses is expressive of their restoration and reunion with the good to which they belong and are serviceable.

The second sign given to Saul was that he should meet three men going up to Bethel, one carrying three kids, another three loaves, and a third a bottle of wine; and after being saluted, he was to receive two loaves of their hands. These three men going up to Bethel describe the progression of the regenerating man as to will, understanding, and life from truth to the good of truth. The men were no doubt going up to worship at Bethel, where was the ark of God, and, it is supposed, the tabernacle also; and the kids, the bread, and the wine were their offering, the kids signifying faith in which is innocence, bread spiritual good, and wine spiritual truth. Saul was to receive from them two loaves; which, though not precisely similar to David receiving the shewbread from the priest in the tabernacle, was yet something of the same nature and representation; for this was bread intended for the temple service, and was therefore in a measure sacred, as being Corban, devoted to God. The gift of this sacred, though not sanctified bread, which Saul received at the hand of these worshippers, was a sign of his being recognised as possessing something of the priestly character, and exercising something of the priestly function, and of being sustained by the sacred bread which was designed for the priest. In respect to the regenerate man, this bread is the spiritual good, the good of charity and the good of love, which supports the life of love in the heart.

The third sign was that of the company of prophets which Saul was to meet after coming to the hill of God, where there was a garrison of the Philistines. What hill this was is not accurately determined; but its name implies, in the spiritual sense, a state of mind in which the love of truth, which is meant by the hill of God, is the ruling principle, but which has not yet overcome and removed the opposite false principle, meant by the garrison of the Philistines. Saul is here brought into the presence of one of the evils for the conquest of which the regal office was permitted in Israel. And the Christian is instructed or reminded, that the love of truth in the inner man is opposed, either tacitly or openly, by the love of falsity in the outer man, in other words, that faith in God is opposed by faith in self, which is the essential ground of faith alone.

The company of the prophets which Saul met, after seeing this memento of the enslaved condition of his country, was the opposite of the garrison of the Philistines; for prophets were the types of the

genuine truths of religion, truths that teach the faith of charity and lead to a life of goodness. And whereas the previous company were going up to Bethel, these were coming down from the high place, where they had no doubt been engaged in the worship of God, whose praises had been sounded on the wind and string instruments which they carried with them, and which represented what the sweet sounds they gave out were designed to express—the affections of goodness and truth, of love and faith. Ascent and descent are expressive of that alternation of state, and of the progression which it effects, which goes on in the minds of those who have earnestly entered on and are consistently pursuing the regenerate life, and which is so strikingly described in the dream of Jacob on the spot to which, from that circumstance, he gave the name of Bethel—the House of God. And well did it deserve that name, for there he beheld the mystic ladder which, resting on earth, reached up to heaven, and on which the angels of God were seen ascending and descending, connecting man with God, and God with man. In every human mind that is sincerely directed heavenward there is such an ascent and descent. The affections and thoughts are directed upwards to God in adoration and prayer, and descend again sanctified and invigorated for the performance of the duties of life. When the company of prophets, coming down from the high place, prophesied, and thus exercised their function and discharged their peculiar duty, the Spirit of the Lord came upon Saul, and he prophesied among them. The prophetic gift did not consist exclusively, or even principally, in the ability to predict future events. It made those who enjoyed it seers and revelators, and raised them into an ecstatic condition, in which they spoke and acted above the sphere of ordinary life. Whatever else may have been included in the prophetic gift, Saul acquired it when he was met by a company of the prophets; the Spirit of the Lord came upon him, and he prophesied among them. But what is the Spirit and gift of prophecy in relation to others? It is the Spirit of truth which God gives to those to whom He has given another heart. When the will is made new the understanding is enlightened to see new and higher truths. These are not merely intellectual truths, but are truths of the heart, because they regard good as an end. They raise the mind which receives them above the ordinary condition of knowing and believing, into that of seeing and loving the truth, and so far realize the devout wish of Moses, “Would God that all the Lord’s people were prophets, and that the Lord would put His Spirit upon them!” (Num. xi. 29.) So great is the change of state, and in some cases so obvious is the improvement of character, which the reception of the Spirit of truth produces, that those who knew such a one beforetime, when they see him prophesying among the prophets, say one to another, “What is

this that has come to the son of Kish? Is Saul also among the prophets?" But such a one is no longer, as a prophet, the son of Kish. It was therefore well answered by one of the same place, "But who is their father?" Spiritually such a one is a son of God. "He is born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (John i. 13). God is his Father. And that which became a proverb is a proverb still: "Is Saul also among the prophets?" It is like the question of Nathanael respecting Jesus, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" We are all too apt to think that a prophet must come of the prophetic line; that a great man must come of a distinguished family or belong to an important place. Yet we are constantly taught in Bible history and in Bible doctrine, that Divine Providence chooseth the lowly, and accomplishes great works by seemingly inadequate means.

When Saul had made an end of prophesying he came to the high place from which the prophets had come down. Thus he ended his eventful progress by ascending to the high place, as the symbol of a high state, to worship the Lord, who had led him to greatness as the means of usefulness.

On Saul's return we do not hear of his father, but of his uncle, inquiring of him respecting his eventful journey, and what Samuel had said to him; and Saul answered that Samuel had told him plainly the asses were found, but of the matter of the kingdom he said nothing. An uncle represents good of the same kind as that represented by a father, but connected with the truth, represented by a son, not by relationship, but by affinity, and therefore can enter into the scientifics or knowledges of that truth, but not into its governing power.

Samuel, having anointed Saul, called the people together unto the Lord to Mizpah. This is not the place where Laban and Jacob entered into a covenant not to pass over to one another, and which was therefore named Mizpah, a watch-tower; for Laban said, "The Lord watch between me and thee when we are absent one from another." That Mizpah was in Gilead, on the other side Jordan; this was in the land of Benjamin. Yet the two places, having the same name, must have the same general signification. Mizpah spiritually means the presence of the Lord's Divine natural represented by Jacob, in the Gentile good represented by Laban. But here, instead of Jacob and Laban, we have Samuel and Saul. Samuel, as a prophet and judge, represented the Lord as the Word; and Saul, as king, represented truth from the Lord as the Word. To express it otherwise, Samuel represented Divine truth, and Saul represented truth Divine. Here, then, Mizpah signifies the presence of the Lord's Divine spiritual in the Divine natural principle of His humanity, thus the presence of Divine truth in truth Divine.

When the people were assembled together, Samuel does not tell them that the Lord had appointed one whom he had already anointed as their king, and that he had assembled the tribes for the purpose of announcing what to them must have been good tidings. Without saying anything to them of the already divinely-appointed sovereign, he proceeds to choose a king from among the tribes by lot, confident that of the many ten thousands of Israel it would fall upon the right person. The lot was acknowledged among the Israelites as a direct appeal to the Deity, so that the decision should rest with the Lord Himself. "Now therefore," said Samuel, "present yourselves before the Lord by your tribes, and by your thousands." The principles of the Church, which the people represented, were to be arranged under the two great divisions of the principles of truth and of goodness, which are meant by tribes and thousands. Of these a successive subdivision is to be made, until the lot falls upon the man whom the Lord shall thus mark as the object of His choice. "When Samuel had caused all the tribes of Israel to come near, the tribe of Benjamin was taken; and when he had caused the tribe of Benjamin to come near by their families, the family of Matri was taken, and Saul the son of Kish was taken." Here we have evidently a further division into general, particular, and singular. The general principle which the tribe of Benjamin represented is, as we have seen, the ultimate form or state of truth, which is truth in act. The particular truths arranged under one head, and growing out of one good as their parent stem, are meant by the family of Matri, and the one singular or single truth, in which all the others are ultimated, and by which they are represented, is meant by Saul. This, then, is the truth Divine in heaven which is to be manifested upon earth, but which is to pass through so many changes, and these changes to be effected through so much suffering, before it can be perfected, and become the perfect Ruler of a kingdom established in righteousness.

But there is another mysterious circumstance connected with the newly-chosen king. When the lot fell upon Saul the son of Kish, they sought him, but he could not be found. "Therefore they inquired of the Lord further, if the man should yet come thither. And the Lord answered, Behold, he hath hid himself among the stuff. And they ran and fetched him hence." Saul's hiding himself bespeaks a becoming modesty on his part, but the circumstance contains a deeper meaning and a more instructive lesson. The truth which Saul represented could not be found by the Church, which was represented by the people. It had hid itself among scientifics. What is here rendered "stuff" would be more correctly translated vessels; and vessels are the expressive symbols of scientifics, which are the receptacles of truth. At the time when the Lord came into the world the truth could not be found, even by those who sought it. It lay con-

cealed among scientifics, that is, among religious scientifics, and only by inquiring of God, and by Divine guidance, could the truth be found. This same circumstance is taught in another fact in the history of the representative people. When Abraham offered up his son Isaac, and his hand, when raised to slay the intended victim, was arrested by a voice from heaven, he looked and saw behind him a ram caught in a thicket by the horns, and he offered him up instead of his son Isaac. The ram caught in the thicket has the same general meaning as Saul hid among the vessels. The ram is the symbol of truth, and the thicket in which he was caught by his horns is the symbol of scientifics, in which the truth was entangled and held captive until delivered by the Lord. In the internal historical sense, in which the events connected with the work of redemption are treated of, the ram represents the spiritual, who were in captivity in the middle state until the Lord delivered them after He had glorified His humanity, represented by the potential sacrifice of Isaac; but that which in the historical sense relates to persons, in the spiritual sense relates to principles; in fact, it was because the spiritual principle in the minds of the spiritual was entangled in scientifics that they themselves were held captive, but still were prisoners of hope, whom the Lord delivered.

Brought forth from his hiding-place, Saul stands among the people, towering above them all; and when Samuel says to all the people, "See ye him whom the Lord hath chosen, that there is none like him among all the people?" all the people shouted, and said, "God save the king!" "Live the king" is the correct and more significant form of acclamation, this being expressive of a wish that the truth may have in it the love from which it lives; for love is life, and only that truth lives, and secures life to those who in faith receive it, which is animated by love.

The two elections of Saul, one by direct appointment and the other by lot, thus by the Lord, evidently represent a double election—that of the internal and that of the external man. This was not, however, the final settlement of the king and the kingdom. Another is recorded in the next chapter.

When the king had been accepted by acclamation, Samuel told the people the manner of the kingdom, and wrote it in a book, and laid it up before the Lord.

When the Divine Wisdom, to which all the future is present, saw that the children of Israel would desire a king, instructions were given in the law of Moses as to the manner of the king they should choose: "When thou art come unto the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, and shalt possess it, and live therein, and shalt say, I will set a king over me, like as the nations that are about me: thou shalt in any wise set him king over thee whom the Lord thy God shalt choose:

one from among thy brethren shalt thou set king over thee : thou mayest not set a stranger over thee, who is not thy brother" (Deut. xvii. 14, 15). When the state of the Church is such that truth, and not love, has the supreme control, it is above all things necessary that the truth which rules should be genuine and not spurious, and that it should be derived from the Word and not from any foreign source. It is further necessary that this truth should have relation to goodness, in order that the faith of the Church should be derived from charity. This is what is taught in the command to take their king from among their brethren, a brother signifying the grace of charity, for charity is the bond of brotherhood.

It was further commanded that the king should not multiply horses to himself, nor cause the people to return to Egypt, to the end that he should multiply horses. . . . Neither should he multiply wives to himself, that his heart turn not away : neither should he greatly multiply to himself gold and silver (Deut. xvii. 17). This teaches that truth should not be corrupted by reasonings and scientifics, meant by the horses of Egypt, nor by natural affections, meant by wives, nor by the knowledges of natural things, meant by gold and silver. Truth itself resides in the spiritual mind, but science, and the affections and knowledges connected with it, belong to the natural mind, which mind itself is Egypt. It was therefore commanded that the king should not cause the people to return to Egypt, to the end that he should multiply horses ; for that would represent a return of the mind to the state from which it has been delivered, a state in which the spiritual was in subjection to the natural, and thus truth to science. This state is well described by the Apostle where he says to the Galatians, "But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?" (Gal. iv. 9.)

Besides telling the people the manner of the kingdom, Samuel wrote it in a book and laid it up before the Lord in the tabernacle, where the Lord's presence was. The regenerate mind is a tabernacle and temple of the living God, and the manner of the kingdom—the principles of the Lord's kingdom, are written and placed therein, when they are inscribed in the heart, and thus placed in the Divine presence. Although the writing of these laws was no doubt a future act, yet there is a spiritual connection between the recorded events ; for when the laws of the kingdom are inscribed on the inner man, all the truths which form the kingdom go forth and enter each into its own good ; as Samuel, after the election and acceptance of the king, sent the people away, every man to his house. It is especially mentioned that Saul also went home to Gibeah. There were two places of this name, one in the land of Judah, and this in the land of Benjamin. That in Judah is famous as

the place where the ark so long remained, and from which it started on its upward progress to Jerusalem in the time of David. As the progress of the ark represented the progression of the Church in man from its ultimate to its inmost, as from one heaven into another, even to the highest, Gibeah, from which the progress of the ark commenced, signifies the ultimate of the Church, which is its natural principle. Gibeah, we may infer, has a similar meaning here ; only, there it is the lowest from which an ascending state begins, here it is the lowest in which a descending state closes. This meaning is also in unison with all that is related of Saul, as representing truth in the ultimate degree. Gibeah literally signifies a hill, and is so rendered in several instances, as in the 10th verse of this chapter ; and as a hill signifies good, ultimate good is that which is the home of ultimate truth, which Saul represented. When Saul went to Gibeah there went with him a band of men, whose hearts God had touched. This does not express the force of the original. The term rendered men means mighty men, and is so rendered in other instances, as mighty men of valour, mighty men of wealth. Here it would seem to mean valiant rather than wealthy men. Such would be the more needful and suitable companions in the present circumstances. The band, therefore, who accompanied Saul to his house in Gibeah, when every man was sent to his home, are those who are zealous for the truth, and ready to fight for it against opposing falsities ; and who engage in the warfare of the spiritual life strong, not only in the belief but in the love of truth, whose faith is not only of the intellect but of the heart, which God has touched with the fire of His love. In the abstract sense these men denote truths themselves, which were added to the truth which now began to reign in the Church and in the minds of the faithful.

But when truth begins to act powerfully in the mind, one of its effects is to excite the evils that naturally belong to it. So we find that while this band adhered to Saul, the sons of Belial said, "How shall this man save us ? And they despised him, and brought him no presents." The Lord's representative was, in this respect, like the Lord Himself when in the world. His disciples, whose hearts God had touched, followed Him, while the Jews, and especially the priesthood, said, Can this Man save us ? And they despised Him, and brought Him no presents. But the Lord, like Saul, "held His peace ;" or, as rightly expressed, was as though He were deaf. For Jehovah has said by the prophet, "Who is blind, but My servant ? or deaf, as My messenger that I sent ? . . . Seeing many things, but Thou observest not ; opening the ears, but He heareth not" (Isa. xlii. 19, 20). The Lord's ear was open to the cry of His children, but closed against their imprecations. "If Thou, LORD, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand ? But there is forgiveness with Thee, that Thou

mayest be feared" (Ps. cxxx. 3, 4). A highly fitting conclusion this of the account of the election of the first king of Israel, the first representative of the Lord, as a king who was to rule by truth and righteousness in the hearts of his people.

CHAPTER IV.

SAUL RELEASES THE INHABITANTS OF JABESH-GILEAD AND DEFEATS THE AMMONITES.

I *Samuel* xi.

THE regal power having been set up in Israel for the purpose of delivering the people from their surrounding and powerful enemies, it was not long before an occasion arose to call forth the energies of their newly-elected king. The town of Jabesh-gilead had been invested by Nahash, king of the Ammonites, and, to save their lives, the inhabitants had agreed to the ignominious condition imposed upon them, of having their right eyes thrust out ; and this was to be regarded not only as a mark of their own submission, but as a reproach upon all Israel—as a sign that the whole power of the Israelitish nation was unable to prevent the indignity threatened to the inhabitants of the invested city. On this ground, we may suppose, the request was made and granted, that seven days should be allowed for the besieged to send messengers into all the coasts of Israel to ask for help. The enfeebled and disorganized state of the Israelitish people, as a matter well known to their enemies, is strikingly evinced by the fact of Nahash granting what he evidently had the power to refuse, and which he no doubt believed he could grant with perfect safety.

When the messengers came to Gibeah of Saul, the people heard the tidings with the grief of despair ; they lifted up their voices and wept. The condition and conduct of Saul on this occasion, considered only as ordinary history, is equal to the finest parts of classic story. Anointed by the hand of the prophet-priest, and himself raised by inspiration to the dignity of a prophet, Saul had returned to his former occupation, and appears now returning from the field after the herd. On learning the cause of their lamentation, the Spirit of God comes upon him, and, by means of a dreaded sign, he collects a large army, and effects the deliverance of the beleaguered city.

The circumstances of the history thus set before us are chiefly interesting to us as describing, in a representative manner, one of the many states of the Christian life and experience, for the sake of which the Word was written.

In one aspect life is a warfare. The flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh. This contrariety gives rise to frequent conflict, and necessitates constant watchfulness to prevent the evils of our nature from obtaining dominion over us and reducing us to a state of servitude. These evils are various, numerous, and powerful. They were represented by the nations and peoples hostile to the children of Israel. Each of them represented some distinct evil, more or less directly opposed to the good which springs from love to God and charity to man. One of those evils was represented by the Ammonites, the nature of which we must now consider.

Moab and Ammon were the two sons of Lot by his daughters. They and their descendants are mentioned in Scripture both in a good and in a bad sense. In a good sense Moab and Ammon signify those who are in natural goodness and truth; in a bad sense they signify those who pervert and profane goodness and truth. When the Israelites in their pilgrimage came to where the children of Lot dwelt, they were commanded not to distress, or fight against, or seize the land of the Moabites and the children of Ammon, for the Lord had given it to them for a possession; and the reason assigned for leaving them undisturbed is, that they had destroyed the giants, and now dwelt in their land. When goodness and truth, however external, remove evil and falsity, and take their place, the Lord does not disturb or disinherit them. But natural goodness and truth are liable, on the other hand, to turn against and oppose spiritual goodness and truth. We see this clearly enough exemplified by the Moabites and Ammonites of the present day. People who are good and true in the natural degree, and who abhor and shun what is grossly evil and false, may yet be opposed to everything spiritual. Yet while they live peaceably they should be left in peace, that is to say, free from hostile opposition; even although their goodness and truth may, like the children of Lot by his daughters, have been begotten by an intoxicated intellect acting under the influence and through the medium of spurious affections. When, however, they actively oppose, and especially when they pervert and profane what is spiritual, they are to be resisted, and they come under the curse at times pronounced against them in Moses and the prophets. Those who profane goodness are spiritual Moabites, and those who profane truth are spiritual Ammonites. When we apply the subject to our own minds, the Ammonites represent the truths themselves which are profaned, and, consequently, the false persuasions and sinful practices which arise from that profanation. But what are we to understand by the profanation of truth, and the false persuasions and sinful practices that spring from it? To profane truth is to pervert its meaning and falsify its teaching, so as to make it appear to favour evil. Truth is nothing but the teacher and

minister of goodness. Without reference to goodness truth is but an empty name; it is expressive of no quality, and is directed to no useful end. But truth can hardly be considered, and is seldom found, without relation to some subject or object. If it has not relation to goodness, it will generally be found to have relation to evil. But it acquires this relation by being perverted. And yet it may, in its perverted state, be most highly honoured. For instance, it is a truth that of himself man is only evil, and can do nothing that is truly good. But this truth is perverted when it is maintained that, therefore, what are called good works contribute nothing to salvation; so that a man must trust for salvation to the merit of Christ. This truth is still further profaned when it is held that, being entirely corrupt, man can do nothing but evil, therefore that evil does not condemn those who are justified through faith. True it is that man of himself can do nothing that is good, but it is equally true that he can do all things by Christ strengthening him.

Besides the doctrinal forms which perverted truth has assumed, and which have gradually risen out of the evils of the human heart, in their desire and effort to free themselves from the restraints which truth has laid upon them, there are other shapes which it spontaneously takes in the ordinary operations of the mind in everyday life. Every attentive observer of human nature must have seen that there are two very different classes of men in society. There are those who are continually striving to bring their practice up to their principles, and there are those who are constantly striving to bring their principles down to their practice. Those who belong to the first class are they who have conscientiously adopted what they believe to be the truth, and honestly strive to realize it in their lives; while those who belong to the second class are they who know or profess right principles, but who are continually trying to justify themselves for departing from them in practice on the plea of custom or necessity.

In considering the Ammonitish character in connection with the present subject, which allows us to apply it to the individual mind, it is not necessary to assume its actual existence among those who are the true Israel of God. Those who have really entered on the regenerate life cannot be supposed to act as profaners of truth, but they can be, and no doubt sometimes are, tempted to commit this great sin. The evils that are actually committed by some exist potentially in all, and are only prevented from coming forth into the life, either by prudential consideration on the one hand or by the controlling and corrective power of truth on the other. In the progress of the regenerate life, the evils of our nature are excited by the influence of evil spirits acting from within in connection with inducements acting from without. It is possible for Christians to suffer temptations from

which others may be exempt ; since the perfection of the Christian life requires not only that evils should not be committed, but that the very inclination to commit them should be overcome. This is one of the reasons that evil is so prominent a subject of the Scriptures, and that so much more is said as to the necessity of shunning evil than the duty of doing good, it being still more important that evil should not be committed than that good should be done. Good may be done without evil being eradicated from the heart ; but the eradication of evil is sure to result in the doing of good. The good that is done before evil is removed is only outward good, but that which follows the removal of evil is inward, and therefore saving.

To view the history in its particular sense. A temptation to profane the truth being described representatively by the attempt of Nahash the Ammonite to take Jabesh-gilead, the place, the people, and the circumstances all tend to throw light on the subject, and to instruct us respecting the consequences of yielding to the assault ; for it is Israel that is tempted, and Nahash that tempts.

Gilead was on the other side Jordan, and was in that part of the land that was given as an inheritance to the half tribe of Manasseh. For when the Israelites came to the promised land, two tribes and a half were permitted to take their inheritance on the other side of the river, on account of the rich pasturage it afforded for their cattle ; but there was this peculiarity with respect to Manasseh, that one half the tribe took their lot in Canaan, while the other half remained in Gilead. By this arrangement the tribes in Canaan itself represented the principles of the Church in the inner man, and the tribes out of Canaan represented the principles of the Church in the outer man ; while Manasseh represented the conjoining medium between them. Manasseh and Ephraim, the two sons of Joseph, represented spiritual goodness and truth, or charity and faith. But the half tribes of Manasseh outside of Canaan represented goodness or charity in the natural mind. The men of Jabesh-gilead belonged therefore to the tribe of Manasseh, and represented mutual love or charity in the external man or natural mind. But they were in a city, which signifies doctrine ; so that Jabesh-gilead represented the doctrine of mutual love or charity. Doctrine is a defence for the principles it contains, as a city is for its inhabitants. Jabesh signifies, and was so called from the heat of the sun upon it, because it lay upon a mountain. Before the present instance, this city and its inhabitants are mentioned only once ; and that serves to explain the cause and nature of the danger, spiritually considered, to which they were now exposed. They are mentioned in connection with one of the most singular transactions of that most singular book—the Book of Judges.

A Levite passing the night, on his homeward journey, in one of the

cities of Benjamin, some of its inhabitants, sons of Belial, abused his concubine so shamefully that she died. The Levite divided the body into twelve pieces, and sent them through all the coasts of Israel. The people rose as one man to avenge so dreadful a crime; and so terrible was the revenge, that they not only destroyed the greater part of the tribe of Benjamin, but they vowed that they would not again give any of them his daughter unto Benjamin to wife. But the people soon relented, and began to lament that a tribe should be cut off from Israel. The few remaining Benjamites had taken refuge in a rocky fastness of the desert; but as their vow did not permit the other tribes to give them wives, the extinction of the tribe seemed inevitable. In this dilemma inquiry was made, which one of the tribes had not come up to Mizpeh and appeared before the Lord when the vow was made; and it was found that none of the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead were there. Twelve thousand men were sent against Jabesh, who slew the entire population, except four hundred virgins, whom they saved as wives for the Benjamites.

It is easy to see that the dreadful outrage of the wicked Benjamites on the wife of the Levite involved the crime of profanation. The men of Jabesh-gilead, by not joining the rest of the tribes to avenge this enormity, virtually consented to it, and thus became partakers of the crime of those who had committed it. All, therefore, were destroyed, with the exception of the four hundred virgins, representing that only those affections which had not been united to and defiled by the falsities of so great an evil could be preserved and united to truths. The Benjamites, who had committed the crime, and the men of Jabesh, who had consented to it, were, with a few exceptions, both destroyed, and the remnants of the males of one tribe, and the remnants of the females of another, were united to preserve and build up a tribe anew. Thus is it also sometimes spiritually. Departure from the principles and path of religion may be so serious as to almost exterminate all perception of truth and affection of goodness; but by the Lord's providence a remnant of both may be saved, that when repentance and amendment take place, the remains of what is good and true may be brought together and united to form the commencement of a new state of life.

Profanation being the subject treated of in the war of Nahash against the men of Jabesh, their previous crime may be supposed to have contributed to bring upon them the present assault, or may show, if not in their actual, at least in their representative character, the ground of such an attack. The people, it is true, were not the same, but their representative character was not necessarily changed. In the present case we see in the men of Jabesh a disposition to yield to Nahash; for they offer to serve the Ammonites, and are only

deterred by the hard conditions imposed upon them. We now come to inquire what those conditions signify.

We can easily account for those conditions on natural grounds. Putting out the right eye, like cutting off the thumbs and great toes, according to the barbarous custom of the times, was for the purpose of rendering them unfit for war. This natural reason is not inconsistent with the spiritual sense.

The eyes of the body correspond to the understanding of the mind, the right eye to the understanding of good, the left eye to the understanding of truth. This signification of the eyes, and of the right eye in particular, is clear from the manner of Divine speech, as we find it in the New Testament, "The light of the body is the eye : if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness." The mind is the spiritual body, and all that is said of the material is true of the spiritual. When the eye is evil, the evil eye, or the evil that is in the eye, must be removed, that the body itself may be preserved. "If thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee : for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell." This plucking out of the right eye in obedience to the will of God is the opposite of the thrusting out of the right eye in obedience to the will of man, as the enemy of God. One denotes the removal from the understanding of the evil which prevents the perception of goodness, the other involves the destruction of the faculty itself by which goodness is perceived. This is the consequence of profaning the truth. It deprives the mind of the power of perceiving goodness ; it puts out the right eye ; and this is for a reproach upon all Israel, for when the understanding of goodness is destroyed the whole mind is full of darkness. Errors in matters of faith obscure the understanding, but do not necessarily corrupt the heart. Such errors are motes in the eye, which indeed prevent it from seeing clearly, but are not like the beam that perverts the vision. Nor are they like the thrusting out of the right eye, which disables us, as soldiers of the Lord, who should follow Him, as the Captain of our salvation, in warring against the enemies of our souls, the evils of our own hearts.

Such is the evil represented by that which first brought Saul into action as the captain of the Lord's people. When he heard of the straits of the men of Jabesh, and the condition to which they had been compelled to submit, the Spirit of God came upon him, and his anger was greatly kindled. Truth, animated with the spirit of truth, inspired him with zeal, which is anger as a generous sentiment. Virtuous anger is zeal. It is an unselfish indignation against wrong, and an ardent desire to vindicate innocence against injury. Zeal differs from

anger in this : zeal has love within it ; anger has evil within it. They are similar in their outward appearance, but are entirely different in their inward state. From this similarity of appearance between anger and zeal, anger is ascribed to God in the letter of Scripture, because the literal sense of Scripture is written according to appearances, the real truth, as contained in the spiritual sense, being, that the Lord is a zealous but not an angry God. But to effect deliverance the Spirit of truth and its zeal must be propagated and spread through all the affections and thoughts of the mind till they come into act. Saul, therefore, proceeded to arouse all Israel to go at once to the rescue of their distressed brethren. He took a yoke of oxen, and cut them in pieces, and sent them throughout all the coasts of Israel, threatening a similar treatment to the oxen of those who refused to come up to succour the inhabitants of Jabesh. Thus are we instructed that all, especially those who are under the yoke, must obey the call, and fight against evil and falsehood under the banner of divine truth, and that to those who refuse to obey its commands the truth is a sword that will cut them asunder, that will divide and dissipate all the affections and perceptions of the natural mind. But the call was universally responded to. The fear of the Lord fell upon the people, and they came out as one man. It was not the fear of Saul, or the dread of his significant threat, but the dread of Jehovah, that Divine name which is expressive of Divine love ; so that they obeyed from love, for this is holy fear.

When numbered in Bezek the men of Israel were three hundred thousand, and the men of Judah thirty thousand. Bezek was one of the cities of Judah, which he took from the Canaanitish king, Adoni-Bezek, whose thumbs and great toes he cut off, which the king acknowledged as a just retribution for having done the same to seventy kings who gathered their meat under his table. These cruel mutilations are symbols of the privation of power which evil brings upon those who commit it ; the law of retaliation, though in their case unconsciously inflicted, being the result of the eternal law which prevails alike in heaven and in hell, that as we do to others, so shall it be done to us. In that place, memorable for the infliction, upon an enemy of Judah, of a punishment similar in its nature and meaning to that which an enemy of Manasseh threatened to inflict upon them, the tribes assembled and were numbered. It is the first time that Judah and Israel are mentioned together as including all the tribes ; two names under which they are frequently mentioned afterwards, as representative of the two universal principles of goodness and truth, or love and faith, which constitute the Church and kingdom of the Lord. The numbering of the people, when done in conformity with the Divine will and wisdom, represented the arrangement of the

principles of the Church according to just order, and in due subordination, so that they may act in harmony and unity under one head, and that head the Lord Himself. The numbers themselves are expressive of the combined qualities of the principles, or of the graces and virtues, of which the Church or religion consists ; for the thousands refer to goodness, and three to truth : the general principle of order amongst them being according to the laws of truth, is further indicated by these being divided into three companies, which also refers to that trine of will, understanding, and action, or of love, faith, and works, in which the principles of the Church are in their fulness and power.

The messengers who had come to seek for help were now dismissed with the tidings that on the morrow by the time the sun be hot the men of Jabesh should have help ; tidings which gladdened their hearts, and enabled them to announce to their enemies that on the morrow they would come out to them. That was, we conclude, the last of the seven days, and the answer was no doubt intended to lead the Ammonites to believe that all their hopes of succour had been disappointed. But the morrow brought a new state of things. In the morning watch Saul led his three companies into the midst of the host, and they slew the Ammonites until the heat of the day, and they which remained were scattered, so that two of them were not left together. The morning watch was the dawn of a new state, a state of deliverance out of temptation. It was a state of light advancing to a state of love—from the morning watch unto the heat of the day, which saw the Ammonites so completely scattered that two of them were not found together : the dispersion that followed the slaughter was so complete that no evil and falsity were left together. As good and truth constitute the strength of the righteous, evil and falsity constitute the power of the wicked ; and when their connection is severed their power is gone.

When the battle was ended, and Saul's character as a leader was established, the people, flushed with victory, demanded of Samuel that the men who had spoken slightly of Saul as a saviour of Israel should be brought out and slain. But Saul with true nobility of soul said, "There shall not a man be put to death this day : for to-day the Lord hath wrought salvation in Israel." It is singular, but it nevertheless is true, that overcoming in one temptation sometimes leads to another. So far as we think we have overcome a temptation by our own strength, we fall into the temptation to ascribe to ourselves the merit of our deliverance ; and so far as we claim merit to ourselves we deny it to others. Saul's words correct this double evil. He ascribes the salvation of Israel that day to the Lord, and declares that after so signal a manifestation of the saving power of the Most High not a man should be put to death. Not death but life marks the state of

true spiritual triumph. Thus are the suggestions of the lower thoughts of the mind reprov'd and corrected by the higher, by referring all power, and therefore all merit, to the infinite Source of good.

"Then said Samuel to the people, Come, and let us go to Gilgal, and renew the kingdom there. And all the people went to Gilgal; and there they made Saul king before the Lord in Gilgal." This was the third time that Saul was made king. It was the renewal and confirmation of his appointment by the anointing of Samuel and the lot among the tribes. There must be something significant in this in reference to Saul's representative character. On the two previous occasions Saul was appointed without any direct choice or act of the people themselves. They no doubt recognised the Divine appointment in the lot; but this was to be a voluntary and deliberate act of their own. So with the Lord's people spiritually. They can see the truth, and acknowledge that it is from the Lord, as it comes to them through the Word and is witnessed by the law and the testimony; but not until it has the testimony of their own experience, especially in enabling them to overcome evil and obtain deliverance from it, do they themselves confirm it and establish its reign in their own hearts and lives. The place where the renewal of the kingdom took place is not without its significance in this confirmatory act. Gilgal is remarkable for two very important and significant acts in the history of the Israelites. It was in Gilgal that Joshua set up the twelve stones that he took out of the midst of Jordan, where the priests' feet had stood while the ark of the covenant and the people passed over; and it was here that the whole of the men of Israel were circumcised after they had thus entered the Holy Land. It was in reference to this occasion that it received its name. "For the Lord said unto Joshua, This day have I rolled away the reproach of Egypt from off you. Wherefore the name of the place is called Gilgal unto this day." This was truly the beginning of the new life, the life of the spiritual Canaan as distinguished from that of the natural Egypt. Gilgal thence signified the doctrine of natural truth, serving for introduction into the Church. But that which is first in the order of the regenerate life becomes the last; for, as we have had occasion to remark, the spiritual life, and the particular states in it, begin and end in ultimates. The quality of the first and of the last state is indeed different. The mind returns to its first state invested with knowledge and experience, and finds in its first truth the confirmation of its subsequent acquirements. The renewal of the kingdom in Gilgal is thus representative of the confirmation of Divine truth in the regenerate mind, by which it is made, actually, because practically, the governing principle in the thoughts and affections. The sacrifices and peace-offerings which they sacrificed to the Lord when they had made Saul king, and the mutual rejoicing

between the king and the people, tell us of the conjunction which is effected with the Lord when order is established in the kingdom of the regenerate mind, and its principles, the ruling and the governed, exist in harmonious relation to each other, and rejoice together.

CHAPTER V.

SAMUEL'S ADMONITION TO ISRAEL RESPECTING THEIR KING.

1 *Samuel* xii.

SAUL being firmly established in the regal office, the function of Samuel as judge has ceased. He now, therefore, delivers what might be called his valedictory address to the people. He speaks to them respecting the manner in which, during his long term of office, he had discharged its duties; and he vindicates his integrity with the entire consent of the whole of the assembled tribes of Israel. "Behold," he says, "I have hearkened unto your voice in all that ye said unto me, and have made a king over you. And now, behold, the king walketh before you: and I am old and gray-headed; and, behold, my sons are with you: and I have walked before you from my childhood unto this day. Behold, here I am: witness against me before the Lord, and before His anointed: whose ox have I taken? or whose ass have I taken? or whom have I defrauded? whom have I oppressed? or of whose hand have I received any bribe to blind mine eyes therewith? and I will restore it you." To this direct and solemn appeal the people responded, "Thou hast not defrauded us, nor oppressed us, neither hast thou taken ought of any man's hand. And he said unto them, The Lord is witness against you, and His anointed is witness this day, that ye have not found aught in my hand. And they answered, He is witness."

Samuel is one of the most remarkable of the public characters mentioned in sacred history, and one of the most eminent of the instruments raised up by the Lord for reformatory purposes in evil times. At the time of his appearance in Israel the nation was demoralized and the priesthood was licentious. The judicial office, which had become corrupt, he restored to integrity, and the offering of the Lord, which had come to be abhorred, he made to be honoured: he brought the people back from a degrading and impure idolatry to the worship of the true God; and by public sacrifice and prayer, without the use of carnal weapons, of which indeed their enemies had

deprived them, he obtained for Israel deliverance from what might have been the beginning of an exterminating war.

The history of Samuel is no less remarkable for its typical than for its actual character and deeds. Elkanah, the father of Samuel, had two wives. Like the two wives of Jacob, one was fruitful, and the other and best beloved was barren. The same truth is represented by both. In the early stage of the regenerate life the natural affection is fruitful, but the spiritual affection is barren. That which is natural is first, and afterwards that which is spiritual: but the spiritual affection, though barren, has an ardent desire to bear, and this desire is in due time blessed with children. Samuel was the answer to Hannah's prayers, and her devotion of the child to the Lord was the fulfilment of the vow she made in asking for a son. Samuel was a second Joseph to the children of Israel, and, like the son of Rachel, while he saved the house of Israel, he was an eminent type of the Saviour. His personal history and character bear some considerable resemblance to those of the Lord Himself. His early life is associated with the temple; and one part of his mission was to expel the mercenary dealers from its sacred precincts. From the age of twelve, when, according to Josephus, he delivered the Divine message to Eli, we hear nothing more of Samuel till, in mature manhood, he appears as a prophet before the children of Israel; and thenceforth his life is one of singular purity and usefulness. Like the truth which he represented, and which the Lord Himself was, his labours were profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. As he appears now and henceforward, he represents the Lord rather as to good than as to truth; for he exercises the sacerdotal function, the regal being now separated from it and transferred to Saul. Yet it is as to his character of judge, as well as to that of the priest and prophet, that he now addresses himself to the people. The demands which he makes of them, when understood as relating to the spiritual life of the Lord's people and the spiritual conduct of ecclesiastical rulers, are very significant. There are spiritual goods and rights and privileges which belong to the people, the loss of which is a still greater misfortune to them than the loss of their temporal possessions. They may be deprived of the power of acquiring or possessing the knowledge of what is good and true, which is to take from them their ox and their ass, those being as necessary for cultivating and enriching the mind as these are for cultivating the field and filling the barns; they may be defrauded of the fruits of their restricted labour by being persuaded that works do not save them, except when their wealth is bestowed for pious uses; they may be oppressed by being denied the right of willing and thinking for themselves in matters of

faith and practice; and they may be induced to give a bribe by being led to believe that by doing some extraordinary act of piety or charity the Divine Judge may be induced to suspend or reverse His eternal law of justice, and admit them into heaven as if they had fulfilled its requirements.

Justified in the sight of all Israel, Samuel now calls upon the people to stand still that he may reason with them before the Lord of all the mighty acts of the Lord which he had done to them and their fathers. He then briefly recounts the deliverances which they had experienced from Egypt, and, in Canaan, from Sisera, the Philistines, and Moab. The oppressions they suffered from these represent, generally, the different kinds of temptation which the members of the Church undergo, which arise from false science, which is Egypt; from external evil, which is the king of Canaan, whose armies Sisera led; from false faith, which is Philistia; and from the evil of perverted good, which is Moab. The subjection of Israel to the nations in the land of Canaan was the result of their forgetting the Lord their God, and their deliverance was the result of their turning to Him again. Besides Moses and Aaron, by whose hand the Lord delivered them out of Egypt, Jerubbaal, and Bedan, and Jephthah, and Samuel are named as the instruments of their deliverance out of the hand of their Canaanitish enemies. These were the most eminent of their deliverers, though not answering exactly to the deliverances previously mentioned, but named for the purpose of giving a general idea of the right principles by which the members of the Church are delivered from a wrong faith and practice. From Moses, the lawgiver, to Samuel, the judge, we see a series beginning with the truth that teaches, and ending with the truth that judges. Between these we have Aaron, the priest; Jerubbaal, the conqueror of the Midianites; Bedan, whose name does not occur in Judges or elsewhere; and Jephthah, who subdued the Ammonites. Here we have the good of truth from which true worship springs, which is Aaron; the truth of good by which the worship of selfish and worldly love is overcome, represented by Jerubbaal, a name which Gideon received for throwing down the altar of Baal; the good which is acquired by that truth, which is Bedan, a name which signifies fat or robust; and the truth of love that overcomes truth profaned, which is Jephthah. This last is a principle distinguished by devoting to the Lord the pure affections of the heart, as Jephthah devoted his virgin daughter, who willingly gave herself to God for having given her father vengeance on his enemies, those enemies being the opposite of what he represented, since they corrupted their affections by devoting them to false gods.

But notwithstanding these deliverances, when Israel saw Nahash the king of the children of Ammon come against them, they said to

Samuel, "Nay, but a king shall reign over us," when the Lord was their King. The king whom they had desired, and whom the Lord had set over them, was now before them; and Samuel solemnly warns both king and people that if they fear the Lord and serve Him they will continue to follow Him, but if they do not obey the voice of the Lord, but rebel against His commandment, the hand of the Lord will be against both them and their king. The Lord accommodates His dealings even to our infirmities, ruling us by a lower good when we refuse to be governed by a higher; but there is one condition of protection and blessing that never changes under any kind or form of government: men must fear the Lord and keep His commandments.

Besides his solemn warning, Samuel gives the people a sign from heaven: "Is it not wheat harvest to-day? I will call unto the Lord, and He shall send thunder and rain, that ye may perceive and see that your wickedness is great, which ye have done in the sight of the Lord, in asking you a king. So Samuel called unto the Lord; and the Lord sent thunder and rain that day." Is there any connection between the subject of Samuel's oft-repeated reproof and "this great thing" which the Lord did in answer to his prayer? or is it only to be regarded as an awe-inspiring sign of Divine displeasure? To the Israelites themselves it would have no higher significance than this; but as all things that happened unto that representative people were ensamples, and are written for our admonition, this Divine manifestation has a meaning and a lesson for us. Harvest, as the ingathering of the fruits of the earth, is an expressive symbol of the ingathering of the fruits of a good life, when the seeds of truth, sown in the good ground of an honest heart, have produced their sixty and an hundred fold. But harvest is also a symbol of judgment; because there is a harvest-time for the evil as well as for the good, since as a man sows so also shall he reap, whether it be good or evil; and because judgment, like harvest, is a time when the righteous and the wicked are separated, like the wheat and the tares. But harvest is a time for individual as well as general judgment, that is, for the separation of good and evil in the mind itself, and this separation takes place not once only at the end of life, but as often as there is spiritual decision in the mind and life between good and evil, which especially takes place after a state of temptation. Such a state, we have seen, is represented by the conflict between the children of Israel and the children of Ammon. The day in which spiritual Israel overcomes and scatters these hateful enemies is the day of wheat harvest. Wheat in the spiritual sense is the good of love and charity, and the day of wheat harvest is a state of love and charity. The state which is here represented is like that described in the Psalms: "O that My people had hearkened unto Me,

and Israel had walked in My ways ! I should soon have subdued their enemies, and turned My hand against their adversaries. . . . He should have fed them also with the finest of the wheat" (lxxxi. 13, 14, 16). But in the case we are now considering, Israel had not altogether hearkened unto the Lord and walked in His ways. They had chosen a king when the Lord was their King. They had chosen to be ruled by truth rather than by love. The Lord gives the victory to those who fight from truth as well as to those who fight from love ; but conquest from truth goes less deeply to the root of evil than conquest from love. This is the wickedness of which Samuel accuses the tribes of Israel, and to impress them with a sense of which he called unto the Lord to send them thunder and rain on the day of wheat harvest. It appears from Solomon that rain in harvest was regarded as a precious gift : "As snow in summer, and as rain in harvest, so honour is not seemly for a fool" (Prov. xxvi. 1). The fool of Scripture is not a weak but a wicked person. The thunder and rain which Samuel called down from heaven were good and precious in themselves, but they were unseasonable. They did not harmonize with their state ; they brought their sin to their remembrance, and told them of the state from which they had fallen. Thunder is called the voice of God ; of the King's Son, who is the Lord as Divine truth, it is said, "He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass" (Ps. lxxii. 6) ; and it is promised that if we follow on to know the Lord, He shall come unto us as the rain, "as the latter and the former rain upon the earth" (Hos. vi. 3). The love and truth of God, of which thunder and rain are the symbols, when they come to those who have sinned against them, excite fear, as the people greatly feared the Lord and Samuel ; yet it does not follow that this is mere slavish fear, for there is a fear in which there is love : this is holy fear. When celestial love and truth are suddenly manifested to us in our spiritual state, though it be in the maturity and fruitfulness of that state, as the thunder and rain came to Israel on the day of wheat harvest, they cannot fail to inspire fear, or reverence, which is the mixture of love and fear, because they give us a perception of our moral distance from God ; as Peter, when the miraculous draught of fishes suddenly gave him a perception of the exalted character of Jesus and a deep sense of his own imperfection, exclaimed, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord." Happy will it be for us if such an impression upon our heart and mind leads us to trust more perfectly in the Lord, and to aspire more ardently after a higher state. And this we are taught to do in the conduct of Israel, who intreated Samuel, saying, "Pray for thy servants unto the Lord thy God, that we die not : for we have added unto all our sins this evil, to ask us a king." Often as this sin had been laid to their charge by Samuel, this is the first time the people have confessed it. His

object in repeating it is now, therefore, accomplished. Samuel has been saying to Israel, as John said to the Ephesian Church, "Remember from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works;" and repentance has now followed remembrance, and the prophet is intreated to pray unto the Lord that they die not. From being the accuser of the people, Samuel now becomes their comforter. "Fear not: ye have done all this wickedness: yet turn not aside from following the Lord, but serve the Lord with all your heart. . . . For the Lord will not forsake His people for His great name's sake: because it hath pleased the Lord to make you His people. Moreover, as for me, God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you." While he comforts and encourages the people, and promises to pray for them, Samuel adds, "But I will teach you the good and the right way. Only fear the Lord, and serve Him in truth with all your heart: for consider how great things He hath done for you. But if ye shall still do wickedly, ye shall be consumed, both ye and your king." These are the sayings of a true prophet, who seeks to convince of sin that he may lead to repentance, and while he gives the promise of Divine favour to the penitent, makes them the subjects of his prayers and of his teaching. All this is highly consistent with Samuel's character as a representative of the Messiah. The Lord reproved and comforted and prayed for and taught His disciples; and He still does all this by His Spirit and His Word, and remotely through those who sustain the true prophetic character in the Church and to themselves.

CHAPTER VI.

SAUL USURPING THE PROPHET'S OFFICE FORFEITS THE KINGDOM.

1 *Samuel* xiii.

SAUL had delivered the men of Jabesh from the Ammonites, and he has now to encounter another and still more formidable enemy. The children of Ammon warred against one of the tribes of Israel, but the Philistines held the whole of the tribes in subjection. Saul's hand is now to be turned against their powerful foes with the view of freeing his people from their oppression. Before we enter on the particulars of the history it is necessary to know the representative character of the enemies with whom Saul has now to contend.

"The Philistines represented faith separate from love. Hence they are called the uncircumcised; for this signifies to be without spiritual love, and to be solely in natural love, with which nothing of religion

much less of the Church, can be conjoined. For everything of religion and of the Church has respect to the Divine Being, to heaven, and to spiritual life; and these cannot be conjoined with any other than spiritual love; for natural love separated from spiritual love is the selfhood of man, which, viewed in itself, is nothing but evil. All the wars which the sons of Israel waged against the Philistines represented combats of the spiritual man with the natural, and thence also combats of truth conjoined with good with truth separated from good, which in itself is not truth but falsity. For truth separated from good is falsified in the idea of thought concerning it, because there is not anything spiritual in the thought to give it illustration. This is the reason why those who are in faith separated from charity have not any truth, except as to mere speech or preaching from the Word; for the idea of the truth perishes immediately, as soon as they exercise their thoughts concerning it. Inasmuch as this kind of religion in the churches pertains to all who love to live a natural life, therefore the Philistines were not subjugated like the other nations of Canaan, and hence so many battles took place with them. For all the historical circumstances of the Word are representative of such things as belong to the Church; and all the nations of Canaan represented things heretical confirming falsities of the faith or evils of the love; and the sons of Israel represented the truths of faith and goods of love, consequently the Church. Hence it was that as often as the sons of Israel departed from the worship of Jehovah to the worship of other gods, they were delivered up to their enemies, or were conquered by them. Thus they were delivered up to the Philistines, and served them eighteen, and afterwards forty years (Judges x. xiii.), which represented their receding from worship from the good of love and the truth of faith to that which is from evil of the love and falsities of faith. In like manner it is related in 1 Samuel (iv. xiii. xxviii. xxix. xxxi.) that they were conquered and straitened by the Philistines. But when the sons of Israel returned to the worship of Jehovah, which was worship from the goods of love and truths of faith, then they conquered the Philistines, as recorded in many places in the Books of Samuel, and in Kings."

"Saul reigned one year; and when he had reigned two years over Israel, Saul chose him three thousand men of Israel; whereof two thousand were with Saul in Michmash and in mount Beth-el, and a thousand were with Jonathan in Gibeah of Benjamin: and the rest of the people he sent every man to his tent." Saul, the son of a year in his reigning, is the truth of good, and his two years' reign over Israel is the union of good and truth. This refers of course to the particular state which is now treated of, as that which follows the conquest of the Ammonitish principle; for progress in the spiritual life consists in pass-

ing through a succession of particular states; and no state is complete, or can be a point of departure for another and better, unless there is a conjunction of the good and the true. The connection of this particular state is further indicated by Saul's choosing three thousand men, and sending the rest of the people every man to his tent, which is expressive of the arrangement of all the common principles of the mind in their true order, those of a more interior nature in immediate subordination to the governing principle, and the more exterior entering into the ordinary uses and duties of life. But there is a new agent introduced here, and a distinction connected with him. We now first become acquainted with Jonathan, the heroic son of Saul, and the devoted friend of David. Two of the three thousand chosen men were with Saul in Michmash and in Mount Beth-el, and one thousand were with Jonathan in Gibeah of Benjamin. Although this is not the place where Jonathan's character as the mediator between Saul and David comes before us, yet, as it is of importance to understand the representative character of one who is so interesting a figure, and plays so important a part, in the singular drama of Saul's future reign, we may here inquire what principle he represents.

We have already remarked that, in the highest typical sense, Saul represented truth Divine, and David represented Divine truth, and Solomon Divine good; and that Saul's reign represented the Lord's life in the world while He was making His humanity truth Divine, that David's reign represented the Lord's life while He was making His humanity Divine truth, and that Solomon's reign represented the Lord's life while He was making His humanity Divine good. Thus the Lord made His humanity, successively, Divine natural, Divine spiritual, and Divine celestial. Regarding the Lord as the Word, these answer to the natural, the spiritual, and celestial senses of the Word. Truth Divine, then, with reference to us, is truth such as it is in the natural or literal sense of the Word. But the letter of the Word consists of truths of two kinds; it consists of apparent truths and of real truths, that is, the literal sense of the Word in some parts describes and represents divine and spiritual things as they appear to men in external states to be, and in other parts it describes and speaks of them as they really are. Now when the Lord made His humanity truth Divine He first made it apparent truth, and then made it real truth. He, like every human being, was first introduced into the apparent truths of the letter of the Word, and then passed through its apparent into its real truths. Not until He had acquired and appropriated the real truths of the letter of the Word, and thus made His humanity Divine natural truth, could He enter into the spiritual sense of the Word and make His humanity Divine spiritual truth. We are instructed in the writings of the Church that none can be

introduced into the spiritual sense of the Word but those who are in genuine truth; neither could the Lord, who glorified His humanity by a process similar to that by which He regenerates man.

While Saul represented truth Divine, or truth such as it is in the letter of the Word, he represented its apparent truths rather than its real truths. The real or genuine truths of the letter of the Word were represented by Jonathan. When we see this distinction in the representative character of Saul and his son, how spiritually characteristic do the lives of these two men appear, especially in relation to David! Consider David as representing the spiritual principle in man and the spiritual sense of the Word. Saul's enmity to David shows the enmity of the natural to the spiritual in man, and the seeming contrariety of the letter of the Word to its spirit, a contrariety which is only in the apparent truths of the letter, for these constitute the letter which killeth, as opposed to the spirit which giveth life. Consider Jonathan, on the contrary, as representing the natural mind of man in its orderly state, and the letter of the Word as to its real or genuine truths, and how characteristic of this is his life in relation to his father and David! From the first his soul is knit to that David. He never swerves in his friendship. Saul's wrath is kindled against David as a rival to him in his throne. Jonathan becomes aware that David is destined to be king of Israel, but this strikes no jarring cord in his soul, and makes no diminution of his affectionate attachment to him. At the same time he acts as a wise and devoted son to his unreasonable and capricious father. He especially labours to turn away his jealousy of David, and his deadly wrath against one whom he was bound by the law of gratitude and affinity to love. As the constant peacemaker between Saul and David, he is the true representative of the genuine truth of the Word, which stands between the apparent truths of its literal sense and the pure truths of its spiritual sense, and which it strives to reconcile, not by bringing the spirit into conformity with the letter, but by bringing the letter into conformity and harmony with the spirit.

Such being the general representative character of Jonathan, we may see more clearly the meaning of his life in its connection with the lives of Saul and David. We may perceive his representative character, especially as compared with that of Saul, in his signal successes against the Philistines. For faith alone, though it may find some countenance in the apparent truths of the Word, is in direct opposition to its genuine truths. Jonathan's first warlike act is to smite the garrison of the Philistines that was in Geba. This is the hill and the garrison mentioned in the tenth chapter, to which Saul came on his return home, after he had been anointed king. Here the Philistines had a military station in a Levitical city, upon a hill, in the

centre of the land, no doubt to overawe the people, like the falsity they represented when it finds a place in the higher affections of men, where it taints the purity of their worship, and whence it exerts a controlling influence over the whole mind. The first attack on the Philistines during Saul's reign was directed against this central garrison, and it was made by Jonathan. This must have been an important victory, for it roused and brought into action the whole force of the two hostile kingdoms. "The Philistines heard of it; and Saul blew the trumpet throughout all the land, saying, Let the Hebrews hear." When the people were gathered together unto Saul in Gilgal, "the Philistines gathered themselves together to fight with Israel, thirty thousand chariots, and six thousand horsemen, and people as the sand upon the seashore for multitude." The Philistines seem to have greatly outnumbered the Israelites, and to have been immeasurably better prepared for war. But the description of the Philistines tells the quality of the principle they represented as well as the power. Like the great army described in the ninth chapter of Revelation, this army of the Philistines represents the principle of faith alone, their chariots its doctrinals, their horsemen its reasonings, their multitude as the sand on the seashore, its endless array of confirming scientifics. In Gilgal, where the people had been circumcised to roll away the reproach of Egypt, they were now gathered unto Saul to roll away the reproach of the uncircumcised Philistines. They had been delivered from the bondage of science alone, but had since come under the yoke of faith alone, a principle not less congenial to the natural man, therefore not less hostile and formidable to the spiritual. The Philistines pitched in Michmash, east from Beth-aven, Michmash meaning treasure, and Beth-aven the house of vanity or of idols. The treasure of the natural man is knowledge, his idols are the love of self and of the world. These are the vanities to which his soul is devoted, and to which all his mental possessions and energies are directed. Where the treasure is, there shall the heart be also.

No wonder that, in their present state and condition, the men of Israel should dread an encounter with this powerful host, and that "when they saw they were in a strait, (for the people were distressed,) the people did hide themselves in caves, and in thickets, and in rocks, and in high places, and in pits. And some of the Hebrews went over Jordan to the land of Gad and Gilead: as for Saul, he was yet in Gilgal, and all the people followed him trembling." Their abject fear showed, indeed, how far they had departed from faith in the living God. They had forgotten the promise, that the Lord would fight for them and subdue their enemies under them. But this promise was conditional: "If ye walk in My statutes, and keep My commandments to do them, five of you shall chase an hundred, and an hundred of you

shall put ten thousand to flight." But in this Israel was an ensample to us. So far as we forsake the Lord, and keep not His commandments, we lose the power that would defend and uphold us, and quail before the enemies which our unfaithfulness has made so formidable to us. Let us look at this subject as a matter of individual experience.

When false principles, which have acquired some ascendancy over us, show themselves in their power, the truths that are gathered to oppose them shrink from the conflict, and hide themselves in our obscure and confused and false thoughts, and in our selfish and worldly affections, and even seek refuge in the extreme parts of the natural will and understanding. As representative of Christian experience in the progress of the regenerate life, this, like all similar trials and conflicts, is descriptive of a temptation, which is an inward straitness and distress, and ultimately of conflict. In these states of mind the evils and falsities that are excited and made active appear as if they were too many and too powerful to be overcome. This does not of necessity imply an evil state of mind. The best men have the severest temptations, and none can be really good without having passed through them. There is no real good but that which has overcome evil. Our Lord, who passed through all human experience, suffered the direst temptations, and in the bitterness of His soul prayed that the cup might pass from Him. Saul in Gilgal, with his distressed and trembling people, is in this state of trial. In this great emergency what is he to do? The host of the Philistines is before him, but Israel is utterly helpless. In their distress the Israelites had one unfailing resource—to call upon their God. But in matters of national interest and of great importance it was necessary to consult the Lord by Urim and Thummim, or to approach Him by sacrifice, and this required one who was entitled to exercise the function of a priest. Samuel had previously made an appointment to meet Saul in Gilgal, to offer burnt-offerings, and to sacrifice sacrifices of peace-offerings, but he had required him to wait seven days. It must have been an anxious time for Saul, yet he remained faithful to the engagement he had made. But when he had tarried seven days, and Samuel came not to Gilgal, and the people were scattered from him, Saul must have been in deep distress, and his must have represented a severe temptation indeed. But in temptation, as in prayer, there is nothing more needful than trust. If the Divine promise seems to fail, and the answer to our prayer does not immediately come, we must not conclude that the Lord has forgotten to be gracious. We must wait patiently for Him, and fret not ourselves in anywise to do evil. Saul forgot to act upon this principle. He called to his attendants to bring him a burnt-offering and a peace-offering, and he at once assumed the office of the priest. No sooner had he offered the burnt-offering than Samuel came. Saul went out

to meet him and salute him, but Samuel, aware of the sin he had committed, asked him what he had done. The reasons he assigned, that the people were scattered from him, that he feared the Philistines would come down upon him, and not having made supplication to the Lord, that he therefore forced himself, and offered a burnt-offering, did not satisfy Samuel. He said unto him, "Thou hast done foolishly : thou hast not kept the commandment of the Lord thy God, which He commanded thee ; for now would the Lord have established thy kingdom upon Israel for ever. But now thy kingdom shall not continue : the Lord hath sought Him a man after His own heart, and the Lord hath commanded him to be captain over His people, because thou hast not kept that which the Lord commanded thee."

It is impossible to conceive otherwise than these circumstances were of Divine arrangement ; and it is almost as impossible to conceive otherwise than that they have a Divine meaning deeper than the history itself reveals. Samuel's delay was no doubt intentional ; he knew what Saul would do ; and he was prepared not only to pronounce Saul's forfeiture of the throne of Israel, but to intimate to him that another had already been chosen to take his place. Under the Jewish economy the usurpation of the priest's office was a serious crime ; because it represented a great profanation, that of exercising the priestly office without possessing the priestly character ; and also that of the natural man usurping the function of the spiritual, and the spiritual of the celestial, which is to appear at the marriage without a wedding garment. The result of this is like that which would follow from an angel of his own will ascending into the heaven next above that to which he belongs, which would for the time quench the flame of his own life without enkindling another.

But this mysterious circumstance must be designed to teach us some still higher lesson, both in relation to the glorification of the Lord and the regeneration of man. We see in it the judgment and operation of truth Divine, which Saul represented, and its rejection as a ruling principle to make way for the government of Divine truth, which was represented by David. But the first cause of its rejection is the unlawful act of Saul offering sacrifice, instead of waiting for Samuel to perform the sacred rite. In that marvellously beautiful exposition of the history of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, as descriptive of the Lord's glorification, we find what seems to me the reason of the serious consequences of Saul's act. "In the course of man's instruction there is a progression from scientifics to rational truths, next to intellectual truths, and lastly to celestial truths. If this progression be made from scientifics and rational truths to celestial truths without the mediation of intellectual truths, the celestial principle is violated ; for there can be no connection of

rational truths, which are derived from scientifics, with celestial truths, except by intellectual truths, which are the mediums of such connection." If the cases are not identical, they are at least parallel. Saul's error was his seeking conjunction with the Lord without the proper medium. The error it represented was that of a lower principle seeking conjunction with a higher without the conjoining medium. This violates the higher and injures or destroys the lower. It is as if faith should seek to pass at once into love without the mediation of charity; for how can one love God, whom he hath not seen, if he love not his neighbour, whom he hath seen? Looking at the subject in that exalted sense in which it refers to the Lord, we are to understand Saul's error in accordance with the principle formerly stated, that the evil acts of those who were types of the Lord represented not His acts but His temptations. Speaking of the Lord's progression as similar to that of man, our author, treating of the first rational principle, signified by Ishmael, whose birth led Hagar, who represented the affection of science, to despise Sarah her mistress, who represented intellectual truth, says, "With the Lord when His rational principle was first conceived there were appearances of truths which were not truths in themselves. Hence His rational principle at His first conception lightly esteemed intellectual truth; but so far as the rational principle became Divine, the clouds of appearances were successively dispersed, and intellectual truths were displayed to Him in their own light, which was represented by Ishmael being expelled the house when Isaac grew up. The Lord Himself did not despise intellectual truth, but He perceived and saw that His first rational principle would be of such a nature that it would lightly esteem intellectual truth; wherefore He reproved it." Now we are to reflect that both Saul and Samuel represented the Lord, but in regard to two distinct parts and states of His humanity. Samuel's reproof of Saul is therefore to be understood as a higher principle in the Lord's humanity reproofing a lower. Samuel in a general sense represented the Lord as the Word. The Lord was the Word, or essential Divine truth. But in His humanity the Lord's essential truth was surrounded by truths of all degrees, angelic and human, even to the lowest appearances of truth. Samuel, as a prophet, represented intellectual truth, which belongs to the inner man, while Saul represented the appearances of truth, that belong to the outer man. "The Lord thought from a principle of intellectual truth, which, being above the rational, was capable of perceiving and seeing from an interior principle what was the character of the rational. That the Lord had this power may appear from this, that an interior principle can perceive what exists in an exterior, or what is the same, a higher principle can perceive what exists in a lower, but not reversely. Even those who have

conscience are capable of this, and frequently practise it ; for when anything contrary to conscience flows into the thought or into the tendency of the will, they not only apperceive it, but also reprove it as criminal, nay, they suffer pain at the thought of being such as are capable of feeling such incitement." Thus it was that Samuel not only reproved Saul, but grieved over him. And thus it is that when, through the appearances of truth, we ourselves are led into temptation—for the devil still tempts us through the apparent truths of Scripture—or even into an evil act, we have an interior power which enables us to see and reprove the outward evil, and to grieve over our frailties and failings, and even to see that the government of the mind must be removed and placed on another shoulder. The time, or the state, for the actual transfer of the government has not yet come ; and there are many instructive circumstances that are to come under our consideration before this takes place. Some of these are related in the present chapter.

"Samuel arose, and gat him up to Gibeah of Benjamin : and Saul numbered the people that were present with him, about six hundred men." Higher always act upon lower principles, but their influence is not always felt or perceived. The fact is, the higher does not act through the lower as a passive subject, but the lower, as a re-agent, acts as of itself from the higher. If the lower always perceived the presence of the higher, and its own dependence upon it for its life and the power of acting, it would cease to be free. Only, then, on occasions is this truth brought home perceptibly to the mind. Samuel came to Saul when his presence was needed, and he now departs. He goes *up* from the city on the plain to the Levitical city on the hill, and no doubt to pray for him whose conduct he had reproved, and whose condition he lamented. Saul numbers the people that are with him, and of all who had been gathered together after Saul there are now only about six hundred men, a number indicative of the strait into which Israel had come, for six is expressive of labour and sorrow. But Saul, and Jonathan his son, and the people that are with them, abide in Gibeah of Benjamin, while the Philistines encamp in Michmash. They have therefore returned to the place and state in which they were before calling Israel together. While they abide there "the spoilers came out of the camp of the Philistines in three companies." The names of the places to which they turned would seem to indicate that, with one exception, they were places of savage wildness ; Shual being a home of foxes, Beth-horon a place of deep caverns, and Zeboim a place of hyænas ; the exception is Ophrah, which means a fawn. Israel, indeed, seems like a fawn, timorous, defenceless, as we shall see, fleeing in terror before her pursuers ; these wild places to which the companies of the spoilers now turn being no doubt the caves, and the thickets, and the rocks, and the high places, and the pits, to

which the great body of the people had fled from the Philistines, and to whom they would now become an easy prey. So with us when our fear of the enemy is stronger than our love of God ; and the very things to which we flee for our preservation become means of our destruction.

A remarkable state of things is now revealed, which accounts, humanly speaking, for the defenceless and disquieted state of the Israelites. So completely had their powerful enemy obtained the ascendancy over them, that "there was no smith found throughout all the land of Israel ; for the Philistines said, Lest the Hebrews make them swords or spears : but all the Israelites went down to the Philistines, to sharpen every man his share, and his coulter, and his axe, and his mattock. Yet they had a file for the mattocks, and for the coulters, and for the forks, and for the axes, and to sharpen the goads. So it came to pass, in the day of battle, that there was neither sword nor spear found in the hand of any of the people that were with Saul and Jonathan : but with Saul, and with Jonathan his son, was there found." The policy of the Philistines, which was followed by Nebuchadnezzar, when he carried the children of Judah into captivity (2 Kings xxiv. 14 ; Jer. xxix. 2), was not uncommon among the nations of antiquity under similar circumstances, and is easily accounted for. Nor is it difficult to understand the corresponding policy of the spiritual Philistines and Babylonians under corresponding circumstances. They naturally wish to deprive those whom they have brought under subjection of the means of defence, and in doing so scruple not to deprive them of the power of providing the means of life. Weapons of war and implements of husbandry correspond to doctrines ; for these we employ as instruments both of defence and cultivation. But doctrines may be true or false, and are so according as they are formed in agreement with the will and wisdom of God, or with the will and wisdom of man. The smith who makes the implement is, abstractly, the intelligence by which doctrine is formed ; and this intelligence may either be derived from self or from the Lord. Self-intelligence is evidently meant by the smith with the tongs, who both works in the coals, and fashions a god with hammers (Isa. xlv. 12), and by him that smites the anvil, who is encouraged by him that smoothes with the hammer, saying, It is ready for the sodering (Isa. xli. 7). The most perfect instance, perhaps, of heaven-derived intelligence presented under this symbolism is one that has only a spiritual meaning. Tubal-cain, who was an instructor of every artificer in brass and iron (Gen. iv. 22), is the name of those in the primeval Church who, from true intelligence, instructed others in the knowledge of natural good and truth, which brass and iron signify. The spiritual idea, then, contained in the natural fact that there was no smith throughout all the land of Israel, lest the Hebrews should make them swords or spears, and that all the Israelites

went down to the Philistines to sharpen every man his share, and his coulter, and his axe, and his mattock, is, that when faith alone prevails, the men of the Church are deprived of all true intelligence, and therefore of all sound doctrine, that they are consequently without the means of combating evil and error, and that the cultivation of what is good and true is controlled and directed by a principle that has no relation to life, which is the end of all true and vital religion. Yet, according to our version, the Israelites were not entirely dependent on the Philistines; they had a file for the mattocks, and for the coulters, and for the forks, and for the axes, and to sharpen the goads. This is a confessedly difficult text. It does not appear to refer to anything that the Israelites possessed or did for themselves independently of the Philistines. The words "yet they had" are no part of the text; and the word "file" is not regarded as a good translation. The root of the Hebrew word rendered "file" seems to mean to blunt, to notch, to found, to hammer. One critic suggests that agricultural implements might be *hammered* sharp. But whatever the means, the sharpening of the instruments is understood to have been done by the Philistines, or by Hebrew smiths whom they had in their service or under their control. The idea seems to be that the Israelites were not allowed to sharpen any of their tools, that they might not be able to make any swords. They were not therefore allowed to beat their ploughshares into swords, and their pruning-hooks into spears (Joel iii. 10), nor to realize the state connected with the Divine purpose, "I came not to send peace on earth, but a sword."

The state which is thus described is such as takes place at the end of the Church, which, indeed, is here represented, since Saul is a type of the Lord at His coming. The end of the Church takes place when love waxes cold and faith is no longer found in the earth, that is, in the Church; but when true love dies out and true faith fails, a false love and a spurious faith take their place, and this was represented by the subjection of Israel to the Philistines and of Judah to Babylon. The first of these states is represented by the state of Israel as related in the passage before us. The people in the day of battle are without sword or spear. They are not able to defend themselves against the chariots and the horsemen, or the doctrines and the reasonings of the enemies of the Church; for those enemies have deprived them of the power of resisting, much more of overcoming, the principles which have come to prevail. But although neither sword nor spear is found in the hand of any of the people, yet with Saul and with Jonathan is there found. We shall see, in the next chapter, what marvellous power is in those single weapons in the hands of these kingly men, the representatives of Him of whom it is said, "Gird Thy sword upon Thy thigh, O Most Mighty, with Thy glory and Thy majesty.

And in Thy glory ride prosperously, because of truth, and meekness, and righteousness; and Thy right hand shall teach Thee terrible things. Thine arrows are sharp in the heart of the King's enemies, whereby the people fall under Thee." And by whom it is also said, "I have trodden the winepress alone, and of the people there was none with Me."

CHAPTER VII.

JONATHAN'S CAPTURE OF THE PHILISTINES' GARRISON, AND ROUT OF THE PHILISTINE HOST.

1 *Samuel* xiv.

WE have hitherto been led on to a rather minute examination of the history of Saul; and yet the explanation is but meagre compared with what the inspired record contains; and it must appear to some, at least, rather obscure, and perhaps arbitrary, for want of confirming passages of Scripture and explanatory observations. To enter as minutely into the whole of the history of the first three kings would require several volumes; we must therefore limit ourselves, except in special cases, to a more general view of the subject.

In this chapter we have an account of a remarkable overthrow of the Philistines by altogether inadequate means.

Saul, with his six hundred unarmed men, tarried in the uttermost parts of Gibeah under a pomegranate-tree, which was in Migron, the garrison or camp of the Philistines having come out to the passage of Michmash. The shadow of this tree is a very suitable place for Saul to tarry under; for pomegranates signify the scientifics of good and truth, which are doctrinals from the Word in the memory, which is in the external or natural man. A passage in Isaiah, in reference to the Assyrians, reflects its light upon this, to show that it has a spiritual meaning: "He is come to Aiath, he is passed to Migron; at Michmash he has laid up his carriages: they are gone over the passage: they have taken up their lodgings at Geba; Ramah is afraid; Gibeah of Saul is fled" (x. 28, 29). And as if to connect, or rather identify, it with the case before us, the next chapter begins, "And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots."

But although Saul remained inactive at Migron, there was one who was bent upon a great enterprise, by which he hoped to strike terror into the hearts of the Philistines, and to restore confidence to Israel. Jonathan, with his armour-bearer, secretly left his father and the

people who were with him, for the purpose of surprising the camp of the Philistines, in the hope of spreading consternation among the enemy and overcoming them. "It may be," he said, "that the Lord will work for us: for there is no restraint to the Lord to save by many or by few." The Lord had shown His people that He chose to work at times, and these times of great emergency, by few rather than by many; not only to teach them that He it is who gives the victory, but that the success of the instruments He employs depends more on their quality than their numbers. One genuine or real truth may have more power than many apparent truths. Indeed, apparent truth is that over and by which error exercises power; and real truth is that by which its power is broken. This was representatively exemplified on the present occasion by Jonathan's defeat of the army, and by David's subsequent victory over the champion of the Philistines.

Jonathan's bold plan, which he carried out with such complete success, was to pass over to the garrison of the Philistines, and attack them single-handed, at least with the assistance of his armour-bearer. Between the passages by which he sought to go over there was a sharp rock on the one side and a sharp rock on the other side; and the name of the one was Bozez, and the name of the other Seneh. The forefront of the one was situate northward over against Michmash, and the other southward over against Gibeah. The Philistines had no doubt selected Michmash as a secure position, and the passes which lay between it and Gibeah are minutely described to show that entrance into the place by that way was beset with difficulties. The names of the two rocks, like some other Hebrew names, are difficult of exact ascertainment. According to the best authorities, Bozez means to *shine* or *gleam*; and Seneh seems to mean a *thorn*. Dr. Robinson believes he identified these two rocks at the entrance to this pass. But there are difficulties to be encountered in the spiritual warfare which these rocky passes represented; falsities which beset our path on the right hand and on the left, southward and northward, are falsities opposed to charity and falsities opposed to faith. Yet those who are in charity and in the true faith, as formed from the genuine truths of the Word, and have trust in the Lord, to whom there is no restraint to save by many truths or by few, will confidently attack evil and error even in their stronghold, though that may be in their own hearts and understandings. For the spiritual warfare is internal—a war of the flesh against the spirit, and of the spirit against the flesh. The flesh is another name for man's selfhood, in which dwelleth no good thing. But the selfhood consists of two distinct parts: there is a voluntary and an intellectual part, or a voluntary and an intellectual selfhood, and, if we may use the language of Scripture in its opposite sense, these two make one flesh. But the new nature, which is meant

by spirit, also consists of two parts, the voluntary and the intellectual, and these two make one spirit, or one spiritual man. These two are representatively described as standing in various relations to each other, according to the nature of the connection or union existing between them, or the use in which they are unitedly engaged. They may be as husband and wife, brother and sister, master and servant, warrior and armour-bearer. Jonathan and the young man that bore his arms are to each other as will and understanding, and therefore as the internal and the external. Jonathan says to the young man, "Let us go over to the garrison of these uncircumcised;" and the youth answers, "Do all that is in thine heart: turn thee; behold, I am with thee according to thy heart." There is perfect accord, then, between the heart and the mind, between the inner and the outer man.

In proceeding on their perilous enterprise Jonathan instructed the young man how they were to act. "We will pass over unto these men, and we will discover ourselves unto them. If they say thus unto us, Tarry till we come to you; then we will stand still in our place, and will not go up unto them. But if they say thus, Come up unto us; then we will go up: for the Lord hath delivered them into our hand." The difference between going up to the enemy and waiting for the enemy to come down is as great in the spiritual warfare as it is in the natural. For the good and true to remain passive while the evil and the false are active is a certain sign of defeat: as the opposite conditions are as certain a sign of success. But the conditions in this case were to be made by the enemy himself. The alternative of the Philistine guard was to be taken as an indication of their confidence or fear. The result answered Jonathan's expectations, and showed his sagacity in judging. When he and his companion discovered themselves to the garrison, the Philistines said, "Behold, the Hebrews come out of the holes where they had hid themselves." Their invitation to Jonathan to come up clearly shows that they feared to come down to attack the assailants whom their cowardice had multiplied into a host. In answer to their call Jonathan climbed up upon his hands and upon his feet, and his armour-bearer after him. This mode of progression shows the steepness of the ascent; but it teaches another and higher lesson: for the hands and the feet are symbols of power, both of the spiritual and of the natural mind; and the power of these combined overcomes great obstacles, and rises to the height of great achievements. So the Philistines "fell before Jonathan; and his armour-bearer slew after him. And the first slaughter was about twenty men, within as it were an half-acre of land, which a yoke of oxen might plow." In the spiritual sense numbers are expressive of quality. In relation to the good, twenty signifies a holy state resulting from the remains of goodness and truth stored up in the interior of the mind;

and in relation to the evil, it means an unholy state resulting from the destruction of remains. Remains are states formed in the mind in early life; and these are either confirmed or rejected when the young arrive at a state of rationality, which they do about their twentieth year. But remains are destroyed, not only by unbelief, but by belief that covers a life of selfish and worldly-mindedness—by practical faith alone, whether the theoretical faith be true or false. Those who are in this state cannot stand in the judgment, whether that judgment be at the end of life or during its continuance; for judgment takes place whenever the truth is brought to bear upon the state of the inner life. Jonathan's first slaughter spiritually means, not first in time, but first in importance, the beginning, of which all that follows is the sequence; just as this first slaughter created that panic in the host, which led first to their mutual destruction, and then to their final overthrow by the Israelites. This state is further indicated by the twenty men having fallen within as it were an half-acre of land, which a yoke of oxen might plough. The land is a symbol of the mind itself, and half an acre is expressive of its quality. Generally, the half of a number has the same meaning as double the number; one reason, in the opposite sense, being, that those who divide goodness and truth unite evil and falsity. Those who practically divide faith and charity practically unite unbelief and uncharitableness. But the extent of the land is more specially described by its being what a yoke of oxen could plough. This mode of measurement, common in ancient times, has a spiritual meaning in the inspired writings; and that meaning arises from the symbolic meaning of oxen and a yoke. Oxen are types of the natural affections, the control of which is meant by their being brought under and accustomed to the yoke. Being under the yoke is a very common figure in Scripture for being under subjection either to a friendly or a hostile power. Of the Lord it is prophetically said, "Thou hast broken the yoke of his burden" (Isa. ix. 4). And when He did come, He spoke of the blessed change in the condition of His redeemed, when He said, "Come unto Me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls" (Matt. xi. 28, 29). The idea, it is true, in the case before us, is not that of bearing the yoke, but of the number of oxen yoked together in ploughing the land, and the portion of land a yoke was able to plough in a day; yet the idea of the yoke lies at the foundation of its meaning. We find a yoke of oxen also spoken of both in a good and in a bad sense in the Word. Elisha the son of Shaphat was ploughing with twelve yoke of oxen, and he with the twelfth, when Elijah cast his mantle upon him (1 Kings xix. 19), as a sign, which he understood and obeyed, that he was to assume the

prophetic office, and labour in a nobler field of usefulness, by the exercise of higher than natural affections. On the other hand, our Lord, in a parable in which He mentions the excuses of some who were bidden to a supper, speaks of one who said, "I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them: I pray thee have me excused" (Luke xiv. 19); where the five yoke of oxen signify all those natural affections which lead away from heaven. Those whom Jonathan slaughtered within half an acre, a yoke, represented those who divide charity and faith, or good and truth, and as a consequence unite evil and falsity, and allow their natural affections to lead them away from heaven; and who are deep in guilt, because they have voluntarily put their neck under the yoke of sin. Abstractly considered, they represent the leading principles of faith alone, the proved fallaciousness of which shows the whole system, which seemed harmonious and united, to be made up of conflicting elements, ready to come into collision and work mutual destruction, when the power of truth is directed against them. This is described by the great trembling throughout all the host, and by every man's sword being against his fellow. Another instance of panic and mutual slaughter, under somewhat similar circumstances, is related in the Book of Judges. When the three hundred chosen out of many thousands caused a panic in the unnumbered host of the Midianites, "all the host ran, and cried, and fled: and the Lord set every man's sword against his fellow, even throughout all the host."

These effects of Jonathan's prowess attracted the attention of the Israelites. "The watchmen of Saul in Gibeah of Benjamin looked; and, behold, the multitude melted away, and they went on beating down one another." Spiritual watchmen are those who observe the states of the Church and their changes; but as it is the truths relating to these states and their changes which enable the mind to perceive them, the truths themselves are the watchmen, which observe, and communicate the intelligence to the mind. There is a connection between the truths of all the different kinds and degrees which exist in the mind, the higher through the intermediate communicating with the lower; but the higher enters into the lower and perceives all that belongs to it, though the lower does not enter into and perceive the higher until it reveals itself. Saul concluded from the effect that the cause must be sought among themselves. He therefore said to the people that were with him, "Number now, and see who is gone from us. And when they had numbered, behold, Jonathan and his armour-bearer were not there. And Saul said unto Ahiah, Bring hither the ark of God. For the ark of God was at that time with the children of Israel." When truths are brought into orderly arrangement, it is perceived what truths are gone forth; and through the affection of good counsel is asked of the Lord as to what is to be done. In asking

counsel of the Lord through the priest Saul availed himself of a privilege which had been granted to Joshua, when he became the leader of Israel. "And he shall stand before Eleazar the priest, who shall ask counsel for him after the judgment of Urim before the Lord : at his word shall they go out, and at his word they shall come in, both he, and all the children of Israel with him, even all the congregation" (Num. xxvii. 21). But Saul does not seem to have proceeded so far as to obtain the Divine direction. For "it came to pass, while Saul talked unto the priest, that the noise that was in the host of the Philistines went on and increased : and Saul said unto the priest, Withdraw thine hand." It does not appear that Saul ever during his reign received an answer to his inquiries through the priestly mediators. Why was this ? Because truth Divine in the Lord's Humanity did not form a true and permanent basis for Divine Truth. By glorification He put off all that was finite, therefore all the appearances of truth, into which He was initiated in His childhood. The same is true, in a finite measure, of the regenerate man. Not apparent but genuine truth is in his mind the true and permanent basis of spiritual truth. It was for this reason that almost everything that Saul did was imperfect. In the present case, Saul did not wait for an answer. He "and all the people that were with him assembled themselves, or were called together, and they came to the battle : and, behold, every man's sword was against his fellow, and there was a very great discomfiture. Moreover the Hebrews that were with the Philistines before that time, which went up with them into the camp from the country round about, even they also turned to be with the Israelites that were with Saul and Jonathan. Likewise all the men of Israel which had hid themselves in mount Ephraim, when they heard that the Philistines fled, even they also followed hard after them in the battle." It appears, therefore, that while the defeat of the garrison produced a panic that spread itself through the whole army of the Philistines, Jonathan's victory aroused into activity and inspired with new courage the whole body of the Israelites. And so it is, that what propagates fear and division and mutual conflict through the ranks of the evil and the false, produces courage and union and mutual aid through the scattered bands of the good and the true. Thus in the day of trial, when the power of evil seems as if it would prevail over the power of good, the Lord of His good Providence, unexpectedly and unseen, opens, even in the darkest hour, a way of deliverance and a door of hope ; and if we are but faithful and work together with Him, He will do for us spiritually what He did for Israel naturally. "So the Lord saved Israel that day : and the battle passed over unto Beth-aven." Faith in the Lord and co-operation with Him in resisting evil is the *state* in which He saves us from our sins, and the battle passes over to Beth-aven when

a fruitless faith is pursued to its own proper result, which is vanity.

In connection with this battle a very simple incident occurred, but one which acquired importance from its threatening to end the glories of the day in the immolation of him through whom the Lord had wrought the great deliverance.

Saul had adjured the people, saying, "Cursed be the man that catcheth any food until the morning, that I may be avenged on mine enemies." The people abstained from eating; but Jonathan, who heard not his father when the charge was given, tasted a little honey, and would have been put to death but for the determined opposition of the people. There are, however, particulars which it will be instructive to consider.

The imprecation of Saul has a formal resemblance to that uttered by Joshua. "Cursed be the man before the Lord, that riseth up and buildeth Jericho" (Josh. vi. 26). Such an oath, as the adjuration is here called, was solemn and binding, whether or not it was wise in itself and whatever the result might be, of which we have an instance in Jephthah's vow (Judges xi.). Saul's purpose was to allow no interruption to the progress of the battle. But the spiritual meaning that lies under the natural sense is, that no good is to be appropriated until evil is subdued, and the spiritual combatant enters on a new state. In pursuing their enemies "all they of the land came to a wood," or entered into an obscure state, such as belongs to the natural mind; but there was honey upon the ground; for such a state has its own natural delight and pleasantness. "When the people were come into the wood, behold, the honey dropped; but no man put his hand to his mouth: for the people feared the oath." They loved the honey, but they feared the oath, and exercised true self-denial, which is to deny ourselves of what we love. But Jonathan, who knew not of the oath, put forth the end of the rod that was in his hand, and dipped it in a honeycomb, and put it to his mouth; and his eyes were enlightened. There is something remarkable in this circumstance. It appears from the sequel that although Jonathan transgressed unconsciously, he was yet held to be guilty; just as those who sinned through ignorance were guilty under the law, and were required to make a sin-offering before they could be forgiven. For evil brought into act, even when done in ignorance of its sinful nature, helps to form an evil habit, which strengthens the inclination from which the act proceeds; and when it becomes known it requires to be expiated by the sacrifice of confession and amendment of life. Yet although Jonathan had sinned his eyes were enlightened. His eyes were enlightened when he tasted the honey, because honey corresponds to natural good and its delight, and this good gives intelligence and

enlightens, whence he knew that he had done evil. The eyes of Adam and Eve were opened by eating the forbidden fruit, by which also they acquired the knowledge of good and evil. But a more analogous case is that of Isaiah's prophecy respecting the second Adam: "Butter and honey shall He eat, that He may know to refuse the evil, and choose the good" (ii. 15). By the first Adam appropriating sensual science came the knowledge of good and evil; by the second Adam appropriating celestial good with its corresponding natural delight came the power of refusing evil and choosing good. But Jonathan's eyes were enlightened to see that Saul's adjuration was unwise. When told by one of the people of the king's charge, Jonathan said, "My father hath troubled the land: see, I pray you, how mine eyes have been enlightened, because I tasted a little of this honey. How much more, if haply the people had eaten freely to day of the spoil of their enemies which they found? for had there not been now a much greater slaughter among the Philistines?" Saul had subjected the people to a severe trial, which they had so far faithfully if not patiently endured. But if a little honey had done so much for one, what would not a free enjoyment of the spoil of their enemies have done for the whole body of the people? Eating the spoil of enemies, when that was lawful, represented the appropriation by the good of that which is good in itself, the good thus turning to a good use that which the evil had employed for an evil use. Yet notwithstanding that the people were faint, "they smote the Philistines that day from Michmash to Aijalon." Aijalon was in the tribe of Dan, one of the two tribes between whom the land of the Philistines was divided. Simeon, the other tribe, represented faith in the will, and Dan represented good works; so that these appropriately supplanted those who represented intellectual faith without works. Aijalon was also famous as the place over whose valley Joshua commanded the moon to stand still, while he fought the five kings of the Amorites; the moon symbolizing faith, as the sun, which stood over Gibeon, symbolized love (Josh. x. 12). The Philistines are spiritually smitten from Michmash to Aijalon, when the conflict with a faultless faith proceeds from knowledge to the good of life.

When they had thus far overcome the Philistines "the people were very faint, or weary, and the people flew upon the spoil, and took sheep, and oxen, and calves, and slew them on the ground: and the people did eat with the blood." Physical weariness after combat is expressive of mental weariness after temptation, which is a sense neither of labour nor of rest, but of a state between. The use of temptation is to free the mind from what is evil and false, and confirm it in what is good and true. But after temptation there is a state of fluctuation, in which the impression of the evil and the false is not entirely effaced, and that of the good and the true is not wholly confirmed; so that

there is a sort of mixture of both, and an alternate activity of one and the other. This state is described by fleeing on the spoil and eating with the blood. When it was told Saul that the people were committing this sin, he ordered them to bring him every man his ox, and his sheep, and slay them there and eat, which they did. So, when the mind perceives clearly the evil of that mixed and, therefore, to some extent profane state, a separation is effected. And when this is completed, and good and truth are confirmed, the cause of self-reproach is rolled away, and the mind is able to serve the Lord with singleness and fervour; as Saul now built an altar unto the Lord: the same was the first altar that he built unto the Lord. The heart itself becomes an altar, when evil is subdued and good is confirmed. If we consider this incident in Saul's history in its highest sense as referring to the Lord, we may see in it a Divine truth relating to the Lord's glorification. The altar in the Jewish Church was a symbol of the Lord Himself: for His Humanity is the altar on which our offerings are laid and which sanctifies the gift. Altars existed before the tabernacle and the temple; in fact the tabernacle and the temple were built in order to provide a place for the altar, that is to say, for the worship of God, which consisted chiefly in burnt-offering and sacrifices, which were offered upon the altar. The building of the first altar was the laying of the first foundation of the tabernacle and the temple, these being, so to speak, built around the altar, as a covering and habitation for it. The first altar we read of is that which was built by Noah, whose history describes the beginning of the spiritual Church, after the celestial had come to an end by a deluge of falsities, which swept away every living principle except a remnant, which was saved to form the commencement of a new Church. Appropriately is the beginning of the worship of this Church described by the building of an altar; for the Lord came to save the spiritual; which He effected by assuming and glorifying human nature, so as to provide a Medium of communication and conjunction between His otherwise unapproachable Divinity and the fallen human race. His Humanity was the medium of approach to His Divinity, as the altar of worship was the consecrated medium of approach to God. Abraham, the father of the representative Church, also built an altar, on which he was to offer Isaac; where the Lord appears not only as the altar but as the sacrifice—for the altar, though a principal, was not the only, representative of the Lord's Humanity. Abraham, we have seen, was the representative of the Lord in the first stage of His descent from celestial to natural, and Saul was the representative of the Lord in the first stage of His ascent from natural to celestial. Therefore the first king, like the first patriarch, built an altar; and this first altar which Saul built was representative of the first foundation of that glorifying process, the

completion of which was represented by the completion of the temple of Solomon.

After having fought and pursued the Philistines till the evening, Saul proposed to go down after the Philistines by night, and spoil them until the morning light, and not leave a man of them ; to which the people consented. "Then said the priest, Let us draw near hither unto God." But when Saul asked counsel of God he received no answer that day. Knowing there was something wrong, he called together the chief of the people, to know wherein this sin had been, swearing by the living God that though it should be in his son Jonathan he should surely die. As no one among all the people answered him, Saul put all Israel on one side, and himself and Jonathan on the other. Having prayed the Lord to give a perfect lot, the people escaped, and Saul and Jonathan were taken ; and in the second lot Jonathan was taken. Charged by his father, Jonathan said, "I did but taste a little honey with the end of the rod that was in mine hand, and, lo, I must die." On Saul saying that he must surely die, the people said, "Shall Jonathan die, who hath wrought this great salvation in Israel? God forbid : as the Lord liveth, there shall not one hair of his head fall to the ground ; for he hath wrought with God this day. So the people rescued Jonathan, that he died not."

The singular fact, which occurs several times in the history of the Israelites, that the transgression of one, even though it be, as in this instance, the unconscious infraction of a law, should close heaven against them all, and sometimes open hell, so as to bring upon them terrible calamities, has yet a most instructive meaning, and teaches a most important lesson. The meaning and lesson may be expressed in the words of the apostle, "Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one, is guilty of all" (James ii. 10). The laws of God have such a connection that one cannot be broken without causing an infraction of the whole. If one link of the golden chain that connects heaven and earth, and God and man, is broken, the connection between them is severed. If the inner and the outer man are out of harmony with each other, unity and united action between them is for the time suspended. If the mind is thus divided prayer remains unanswered, and the enemy remains unsubdued. Yet, as another apostle teaches, "there is a sin unto death, and there is a sin not unto death" (1 John v. 16, 17). Surely the trespass of Jonathan was a sin not unto death. It was a transgression of the letter but not of the spirit ; and though the letter may condemn such sins, as Saul condemned Jonathan, yet the general testimony as well as the spirit of the law pronounces an acquittal, as the whole body of the people appealed, with a God forbid, against the judgment.

Saul now went up from following the Philistines, and the Philistines

went to their own place, to intimate that when the state of conflict is ended there is a recession of the conflicting principles, when there is not a complete conquest of one or the other. The conquest of the Philistines, or indeed of any other of the nations hostile to Israel, was not to be effected by Saul. Yet "Saul from this time took the kingdom of Israel, and fought against all his enemies on every side, against Moab, and against the children of Ammon, and against Edom, and against the kings of Zobah, and against the Philistines: and whithersoever he turned himself, he vexed them." Truth Divine, when it takes the government, actively opposes evils and falsities of every kind; and although it does not subdue it vexes them, and this restrains them and loosens their hold, so that they may be the more easily shaken off, or entirely subdued, when the power to effect this is acquired. The Amalekites and the Philistines were, however, the chief objects of his opposition, the Amalekites representing falsity grounded in interior evil, and the Philistines representing falsity from exterior evil, which is the practical form of faith alone. This principle is more directly opposed to, and must therefore be opposed by, truth grounded in good, which every king of Israel represented; and so there was sore war against the Philistines all the days of Saul; and this war both necessitates and leads to the acquirement of new truths that maintain charity and works against mere faith, as Saul, when he saw any strong man, or any valiant man, took him unto him. Between the first and last of these statements the sacred writer gives an account of Saul's family. His sons and daughters are the afflictions of truth and good produced by a right faith in union with true charity, represented by Saul and his wife, Ahinoam, a name which means the brother of grace. The name of the captain of his host was Abner, the son of Ner, Saul's uncle. Of Abner, father of light, we shall have something more to say when we come to treat of his treacherous murder by Joab (2 Sam. iii. 27). As hosts, or armies, signify the truths of the Church combating against falsities, the captain of the host signifies the principal truth by which they are ordained and directed.

CHAPTER VIII.

SAUL SENT TO DESTROY AMALEK.

1 Samuel xv.

NEXT to the blessing of possessing the Scriptures of the New Testament is that of being able rightly to interpret those of the Old; and

next to the privilege of living under the Christian dispensation is that of being able to know the true nature of those which have been before it. By not accurately distinguishing between the nature of the Jewish and Christian dispensations, and the character of the Scriptures that belong to them, Christianity has, to a certain extent, imbibed the spirit and adopted the practice of Judaism. Assuming that the Israelites were the chosen and favoured people of God, what they did under the sanction of Divine authority is considered by some to have been agreeable to the Divine will, and may therefore be imitated with the Divine approbation. Others again have supposed that the Jewish Scriptures ceased with the Jewish dispensation, and have, therefore, no real authority with or value for Christians. The light which we now enjoy enables us to see that there is a great distinction and yet a perfect harmony between the Old and the New. The Jewish and Christian Scriptures are widely different in their outward literal form, but entirely at one in their inward spiritual essence. The two dispensations were dissimilar, but they are analogous. The Jewish Church was the type of which the Christian is the antitype. What was natural to the Jews is spiritual to Christians. Egypt was their world, the desert their cross, Canaan their heaven; prosperity was their happiness, and length of days their immortality. Their enemies were those who stood in the way of their temporal acquisitions, and their wars and their weapons were carnal. Translated into spiritual language, their history is a delineation of Christian experience. In this way we must read it, if we would see it to be Divinely conducted and spiritually instructive. The war of extermination waged against the seven nations of Canaan had no doubt a deep moral cause. For when nations become thoroughly corrupt, it is necessary for the welfare and even for the preservation of the race that they should be removed from the earth. But the history of the Jewish wars is only spiritually instructive when the nations with which they warred are regarded as representing the evil and false principles of our own corrupt selfhood, as opposed to the spiritual principles of goodness and truth, which constitute our new nature. Each of these nations represented some particular evil or false principle. Those which were represented by the Ammonites and the Philistines we have already considered. We now come to speak of another, one of a deeply malignant character.

Amalek was a fierce nation inhabiting a country on the borders of Canaan. They were the first to assail Israel after the passage of the Red Sea. On that occasion they did not attack the Israelites openly, but, watching their opportunity, assailed them when they were dispirited and feeble, after having suffered from extreme thirst. Yet we are to remember that the Israelites, when they sinned, were punished

by a nation whose character corresponded to the evil from which they transgressed. When suffering from thirst, they had murmured almost to the denial of the Divine presence among them. There was, therefore, a representative affinity between murmuring Israel and avenging Amalek. As one of the few instances of particular explanation, by our great expositor, of the history of the three kings, is on the subject of the Amalekites, it may be usefully introduced here. "It may be expedient to show what sort of persons are in falsity grounded in interior evil which Amalek represents. Interior evil is that which lies inwardly concealed in man, stored up in his will, and hence in his thoughts, without any trace of it appearing outwardly, as in the actions, the speech, and the countenance. Those who are in such evil endeavour by every method and art to conceal and hide it under the appearance of honesty, justice, and neighbourly love; and still they think only of doing evil, and as far as they can they do it by means of others, taking care not to let it appear to be from themselves: they also disguise the evil itself, so that it may seem not to be evil. The great delight of their life is to devise such schemes, and to attempt them secretly. This is called interior evil. Those who are in this evil are called *genii*, and in the other life are entirely separate from those who are in exterior evil, and are called spirits. The evil *genii* have their hell behind man, that is, at his back, and are there in various caverns; but evil spirits have their hell before man, and also at his sides. Those *genii* in the grand man belong to the province of the cerebellum, and also to that part of the spinal marrow which sends out fibres and nerves to the involuntary parts. It may further be remarked that the falsity derived from this evil is not like the falsity derived from the evil of evil spirits, for in itself it is evil. Those who are in this evil do not assault the truths but the goods of faith; for they act by depraved affections, by which they pervert good thoughts, and this in an almost incomprehensible manner. Being of such a character, their hells are entirely separate from those of evil spirits, so much so that they have hardly any communication, and this with a view to their separation from the men of the spiritual Church; for if they were to flow in from their hells, the man of that Church would be utterly ruined, for they would act most secretly upon his conscience, and would pervert it by exciting depraved affections. These infernal *genii* never assault a man openly, or when he is able to resist them, but when he appears to be on the point of yielding they suddenly present themselves, and force him to fall absolutely. This is represented by Amalek invading; and afterwards, when the children of Israel opposed themselves to the Lord, and were afraid of the nations of Canaan, 'then also came down Amalek with the Canaanite from the mountain, and smote the children of Israel unto Hormah' (Num. xiv.

45). From all this may be manifest the character of those who are represented by Amalek, and why the judgment upon Amalek from the Lord was that there should be war with them perpetually, and that their memory should be blotted out from under heaven." This was the enemy that assailed Israel at Rephidim, when tempted to deny the presence and providential care of God. Such a temptation can only arise out of that state of the human heart which, when openly manifested, denies the Divine government in the world and in human affairs. This evil is the root of unbelief. We all have this root within us. Although we may shudder at the idea of denying God to be the Ruler of heaven and earth, we may feel and act so as to show that we have no true reliance on Divine Providence, which is the Divine government. This is the form which the evil takes among professing Christians. It is more insidious and more deceptive than a suggestion to make an open denial of God. It is a false principle grounded in interior evil, which Amalek represented. Such was the nature of the temptation which that of Israel at Rephidim typified. After the Amalekites had assailed Israel on that occasion, they were defeated by Joshua. It was then that the Divine judgment went forth against them: "I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven. The Lord hath sworn that He will have war with Amalek from generation to generation." This sentence Saul was now commissioned to execute. Samuel first reminds him that he is the Lord's anointed, and therefore ought to obey the voice of the Lord. Then he proceeds: "Thus saith the Lord of hosts, I remember that which Amalek did to Israel, how he laid wait for him in the way, when he came up from Egypt. Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass." No immediate cause is here assigned for the issue of this terrible edict against the Amalekites; it is for a crime committed four hundred years before, still kept in the Divine remembrance. What are we to understand by the Divine remembrance? He with whom the past and the future are present does not call things to mind. Such expressions are to be understood of the Divine in relation to the states of men. The Lord remembers when His truth is brought to our remembrance. The Lord, when on earth, promised the Holy Spirit, which was to bring all things to their remembrance whatsoever He had said unto them. But this promise meant, not only the recollection of past words but the reproduction of former states. The spiritual memory is not the memory of facts but of principles. That only is inscribed on the inner memory which has been received into the inner life; and spiritual remembrance is no other than the reproduction of previously acquired principles, with the effort to bring them forth from the inward

into the outward life. Such an act and effort are to be understood by the Lord remembering what Amalek had done in the desert. The Amalekites had repeatedly assailed Israel and had repeatedly been defeated; but now the command was utterly to destroy them. This destruction was now to be attempted because the instrument for effecting it had been provided. A king represented truth derived from goodness, and this is the opposite of falsity derived from evil. No principle can be completely overcome but by its opposite. It is the presence of good and truth that brings their opposites to remembrance; for it is then that the opposite evil and falsity are excited by temptation, and the conflict takes place which should utterly destroy them. It is true that Saul did not fully execute his commission. This was to represent that truth Divine was not equal to this great enterprise. The Divine command, which represented the Divine will, was, however, partially fulfilled; and although Saul lost his crown on account of his shortcoming, what he did accomplish no doubt rendered the complete overthrow of the Amalekites more easy and certain under the reign and by the power of David. The particulars of Saul's conduct demand our attention.

When Saul received the message of the Lord through Samuel, he gathered the people together and numbered them in Telaim, two hundred thousand footmen, and ten thousand men of Judah. The principles of truth and goodness, brought together, and arranged according to the laws of Divine order, are the men of Israel and Judah gathered and numbered in Telaim. Telaim is mentioned only twice, here and in Isaiah xl. 11. Its meaning, taken in its connection there, will give us a good idea of its spiritual signification here. The word itself signifies young lambs. It occurs in that beautiful prophecy respecting the Lord's Advent: "O Zion, that bringest good tidings, get thee up into the high mountain; O Jerusalem, that bringest good tidings, lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God! Behold, the Lord God will come with strong hand, and His arm shall rule for Him: behold, His reward is with Him, and His work before Him. He shall feed His flock like a shepherd; He shall gather the lambs with His arm, and carry them in His bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young" (Isa. xl. 9). Jehovah comes with strength, and His arm, which is His Humanity, rules for Him; and yet, while He comes as a strong man, to rule even in the midst of His enemies (Ps. cx. 2), He comes also as a shepherd, to gather the lambs with His arm, and carry them in His bosom. So should those who go forth in the spiritual warfare. While they endeavour to scatter the wolves, they should be careful to gather the lambs. In the particular sense, the Christian should engage in conflict armed with the power of truth and influenced by the spirit

of love. He should gather and number his forces in Telaim. As Telaim was in the land of Judah, it is symbolic of the innocence of wisdom.

When Saul with his army came to the valley where was a city of the Amalekites, he first gave warning to the Kenites, who were with them, to depart, that they might not be involved in the ruin which was threatened to the ancient enemy of Israel. The reason assigned for Saul's desire to spare them was that the Kenites had shown kindness to Israel when they came up out of Egypt. The Kenites are understood to be the same as the Midianites, of whom Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses, was the priest (Judges i. 16), and who came to meet Moses in the wilderness (Exod. xviii. 1). As the Amalekites were the first of the nations to assail Israel after they entered the desert, the Kenites were the first to befriend them, and we find their coming mentioned immediately after the conflict with Amalek. Yet these two peoples are now found together; and but for the friendly warning of Saul, the Kenites would no doubt have shared in the destruction that overtook Amalek. A similar combination is mentioned in the Book of Judges in the time of Gideon. "The Midianites and the Amalekites and all the children of the east lay along in the valley like grasshoppers for multitude" (vii. 12). On that memorable occasion, this mighty host was overthrown by the three hundred that, when brought to a stream, lapped the water like a dog, affording an illustration of the fact that evil is overcome by appositions as well as by opposition, for the name Amalek means to lick up like a dog. The Kenites, considering them as the Midianites, represented those who have good natural dispositions, but do not concern themselves about truth. Why, then, should they be found among those who represent such as have a keen but perverted understanding? Because those who are in a state of simple goodness are most ready to yield to the ingenious reasonings and winning persuasions of the designing. They are capable of being led by the evil more easily than by the good; for the evil have the wisdom of the serpent without the harmlessness of the dove, and are unscrupulous in its use, while the good try not to persuade but to convince. But considering these two peoples as representing corresponding principles in the minds of those who are being regenerated; the Lord provides that in all possible cases where they are together they should not be mixed, so that in the day of conflict the good may not perish with the evil, and therefore the mind is instructed to distinguish and separate them. When the Kenites departed Saul fell upon the Amalekites, and smote them "from Havilah until thou comest to Shur, that is over against Egypt." The wilderness of Shur is memorable as the scene of Hagar's trial, when she fled from the face of her mistress; and the land now inhabited by the Amalekites is

mentioned in Genesis (xxv. 18) as that which her son Ishmael and his tribe possessed : "They dwelt from Havilah unto Shur, as thou comest to Assyria." The situation of this country, in respect to Egypt and Assyria, marks its representative character as that which lies between science and reason. In the writings, science, knowledge, and reason form a graduated series. Science is of the memory, knowledge is of the thought, reason is of the understanding. That which lies between science and reason is knowledge ; or, what is the same, that which lies between the memory and the understanding is thought. Havilah and Shur have a similar meaning to Egypt and Assyria, but only more limited, as what is particular in respect to what is general. To smite the Amalekites from Havilah to Shur is to execute the judgment of Divine Truth upon falsity grounded in interior evil, and to pursue it from its basis in the memory as science up to its seat in the understanding as reason.

But although the overthrow of Amalek was, in a general sense, complete, the Divine purpose remained unaccomplished. "Saul and the people spared Agag the king, and the best of the sheep, and of the oxen, and of the fatlings, and the lambs, and all that was good, and would not utterly destroy them : but every thing that was vile and refuse, that they destroyed utterly." In sparing some when he should have destroyed all, Saul was no doubt guilty of disobedience. Yet the sin does not seem so great as to have drawn down upon him so severe a punishment. Of course if we admit that sin does not necessarily consist in the nature of the act but in the transgression of the command, the sin is the same whatever the act may be. But this principle is not, we think, a sound one. It may be supported by the mere letter of the Word ; as, for instance, by Adam eating the forbidden fruit, where there appears to be nothing evil but the act of disobedience. But all instances of this kind show that there is a deeper meaning than that which the letter expresses. The Divine Justice is too pure to make an act sinful which is not in its nature hurtful. Saul's sin would not have been so severely censured and so heavily punished if it had not involved and represented a spiritual act that entails eternal consequences. The saving of Agag alive, and the sparing of the best of the flock and of the herd, which shared not in the guilt or moral corruption of their owners, had nothing of the character of evil in itself, unless it may have proceeded from covetousness ; and their destruction would never have been commanded but for the purpose of conveying a spiritual truth and teaching a spiritual lesson to the members of the Church in all future ages. What truth is contained in the command to Saul to slay utterly, and what lesson it was designed to teach, we shall see as we proceed. Meantime we must consider the result of Saul's disobedience. "Then came the word of

the Lord unto Samuel, saying, It repenteth Me that I have set up Saul to be king : for he is turned back from following Me, and hath not performed My commandments." What are we to understand by the Lord repenting, and repenting that He had made Saul king? Human repentance implies either a change of opinion or a change of purpose—of the understanding or of the will. This last, not excluding the first, is the Scripture state of repentance towards God. These changes are incident only to imperfect and sinful beings, and are not, therefore, possible with God. This Samuel declares plainly when assuring Saul that the Lord had rent the kingdom from him, and given it to another better than he. "The Strength of Israel will not lie nor repent : for He is not a man, that He should repent." He who sees the end from the beginning can make no mistakes, and can, therefore, have no cause for repentance. But although God cannot repent, repentance, attributed to Him in Scripture, is not without a meaning. When God is said to repent of the evil that He has threatened, repentance signifies mercy. When He is said to repent of what He has done, as of having made man, and of having made Saul king, there is something besides mercy included in its meaning. In the inmost or celestial sense the whole Word treats of the Lord as the incarnate God. This, we have seen, is the subject of the history of Saul, who represents the Lord as truth Divine, before His Humanity was made Divine Truth. Jehovah could not repent that He had assumed humanity subject to the common infirmities of our fallen nature, yet there was something in His early state and experience which gave rise to something analogous to human repentance. The Lord, as man, did not, like ordinary men, pass from a state of sin to a state of righteousness, and had never therefore to do the work of repentance. But there were other human states and changes of state which He passed through which were attended with a state analogous to repentance. Indeed the Lord, in the process of His glorification, passed through states analogous to all those through which ordinary men pass in the course of their regeneration. Man undergoes changes of state both natural and spiritual. He passes through the several states of infancy and childhood and youth and manhood ; but he goes through still greater changes in passing from natural to spiritual, and from spiritual to celestial states of life. Our Lord also grew in wisdom and in stature and in favour with God and man. He grew physically and mentally ; and from being a Divine natural became a Divine spiritual and a Divine celestial man. When an ordinary man, in the progress of his natural and spiritual life, passes from a lower into a higher state, he sees the imperfection of the state from which he has risen, and the comparatively superficial nature of the trials or temptations he had experienced while he was in it. In the earlier states of the

regenerate life temptation does not reach the lower depths of evil, because its lower depths are neither known nor felt, nor is the true character of the excited evil understood. The knowledge of evil is then general but not particular, and therefore the opposition to it is general. The people are slain, but Agag the ruler is saved alive, and the best of everything is preserved. Our Lord, in passing through corresponding states, had corresponding experiences. This was shadowed forth in the conduct of those who were types of Him ; and Saul was one of those types. Their sins, as I have said, represented His temptations. Unlike any other man, the Lord never failed in His conflicts with evil and the powers of evil ; but His temptations did not, in His earlier life, always go to the greatest depths of the evil which assailed Him. This is clearly set before us in the writings, where the analogy between the Lord's glorification and man's regeneration is treated of : " Every man first of all supports spiritual combat by the goods and truths he has acquired by knowledges, and from them and by them he judges respecting evils and falsities. Every man, also, when he first begins to engage in spiritual combats imagines those goods and truths by which he supports the combat to be his own, that is, he attributes them to himself ; and he at the same time attributes to himself the power by which he resists. Before man is regenerated it is impossible for him to know, so as to be able to say he knows, acknowledges, and believes it, that nothing good and true is from himself, but that all goodness and truth is from the Lord. Nor does he know that he is not able to resist anything evil and false by his own power ; for he does not know that evil spirits excite and infuse evils and falsities, still less that by evil spirits he has communication with hell, and that hell with all its weight presses upon him, as the sea does upon every part of a dyke raised to oppose its waves, a pressure which it is utterly unable by its own strength to resist. But as nevertheless, before regeneration, he cannot help imagining that he fights by his own strength, he is permitted to imagine so, but afterwards he is more enlightened. When man is in such a state as to suppose that goodness and truth are from himself, and that the power of resisting is his own, then the goods and truths by which he fights against evils and falsities are not really good and true, although they appear to be so ; for his selfhood is in them and he takes merit to himself in the victory, and boasts as if he had conquered the evil and falsity, when yet it is the Lord alone who fights and conquers. That this is the truth of the case can only be known by those who are regenerated by temptations. As the Lord in His earliest childhood was introduced into the most grievous combats against evils and falsities, He could not do otherwise than entertain this same imagination, as well because it was according to Divine order that His human

essence should be introduced by continual combats and victories to his Divine essence, and be united thereto, as because the goods and truths by which He fought against evils and falsities belonged to the external man ; and as these goods and truths were thus not altogether Divine, therefore they are called apparent goods and truths. His Divine essence thus introduced the human essence to conquer by its own power. In a word, in His first combats the goods and truths from which the Lord fought were tainted with somewhat hereditary from the mother, and so far as they were tainted they were not Divine, but by degrees as He conquered evil and falsity they were perfected and made Divine." Now apparent truths and goods are goods and truths Divine, but not Divine goods and truths—they are from the Divine, but not in themselves Divine. They are such as exist in the minds of angels and men, and are finited by being received in finite faculties. Such were the goods and truths by which our Lord carried on His early conflicts with the powers of darkness, and by which He made His Humanity truth Divine, as preparatory to His making it Divine Truth. These finited and therefore apparent goods and truths, tainted with somewhat hereditary from the mother, being represented by Saul, we can see the marvellous truthfulness of Saul's checkered history, as typical of the early history of our Lord's inner life and experience. We can see that our Lord's early conflicts with the powers of darkness were less interior, and His victories over them less complete, than when He had put off more of the imperfections He inherited from His human mother, and put on more of the infinite perfections He inherited from His Divine Father. We can see why in Saul's conflict with the Amalekites the people were slain but the king was saved alive, and why everything that was vile and refuse was destroyed utterly, while the best of the flocks and herds were spared. The general principles of evil and falsity were, like the people, destroyed, but the ruling principle, like the king, was not yet overcome. The temptation and victory did not go to the root of the evil, although, as we shall see, this did not finally escape. Whatever was apparently evil and false in the external man was, like the things vile and refuse, destroyed utterly, but what appeared to be good and true was preserved. We can see further why it repented the Lord that He had made Saul king, even when considered in reference to him whom Saul represented. Repentance does not in any case mean a change in the Divine mind, but it means in every case a want of harmony between the Divine and the human mind. Here, therefore, it expresses a want of harmony between the Lord's Divine and human nature ; between the absolutely and the apparently good and true in the Lord, who, as yet, was God and man, but not yet God-man. The Divine Being repenting that He had made

Saul king, does not mean that it had been better the Lord had not assumed a frail humanity, so that its imperfections should be manifested in His early conflicts with the powers of evil, but that these imperfections were irreconcilable with the Divine perfections, and must be removed ; or, as we have elsewhere expressed it, that truth Divine could not be a permanently but only a temporarily ruling principle in the Lord's Humanity. Yet the selfhood of the maternal humanity, like that of every ordinary human being, only began to manifest itself in the Child Jesus when He began to show the active workings of hereditary evil, that slumbers in the infant breast of every child of Adam, until it is awakened by exciting agencies in the progress of mental development. Hence the seeming inconsistency of the Lord choosing Saul and afterwards repenting of the choice. As it was not till Saul began to manifest evil qualities which he did not seem at first to possess, the Lord repented He had made him king ; so it was not till hereditary evil began to unfold itself in the maternal humanity of the Lord that the contrariety between the Divine and the human began to manifest itself, the perception of the active existence of which is expressed by the Divine Being repenting.

When the word of the Lord came to Samuel, saying, "It repenteth Me that I have made Saul king, it grieved Samuel, and he cried unto the Lord all night." In the extract we have given from the writings respecting the Lord's early states and experiences, one of the reasons assigned for His imagining that the goods and truths by which He maintained His combat against evil and falsity, and the power by which He maintained it, were His own, was, that the goods and truths by which He fought were of the external man. A Divine dictate now comes to the internal man, giving a perception of this condition of the external ; and the result is internal grief, and an ardent desire to come into closer union with the Divine itself. We read in the Gospel that the Lord went into a mountain and continued all night in prayer to God. Such dark states of mental tribulation experienced by the Son of Man were faintly shadowed by the grief and the night-long cry of Samuel ; and for corresponding reasons, which our Lord Himself expressed when He said, "The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak." But this internal dictate, strengthened by earnest prayer, is to be brought down into the external. Samuel therefore rises early to meet Saul in the morning, that in the dawn of a new state the truth which has been imparted to the inner man may be brought down into the outer man also. "It was told Samuel, saying, Saul came to Carmel, and, behold, he set him up a place, and is gone about, and passed on, and gone down to Gilgal." This is not the Carmel so celebrated in Scripture for its fruitfulness and beauty, from which it derived its name ; but we may infer that, as a city, it had, relatively to mount

Carmel, the same meaning that a principle in the understanding has to the same principle in the will ; and therefore means the doctrine of internæ good and truth. It was in Carmel that Saul set up a place, which is understood to have been a memorial of his victory over the Amalekites ; as the pillar which Absalom set to keep his name in remembrance was called Absalom's place (2 Sam. xviii. 18) ; and which favours the idea of a state, which Saul's state was as well as represented—something of self-glorying in victory. But Saul had gone about and gone down to Gilgal, and thither Samuel followed him to "roll away" the reproach of Amalek.

Having thus far considered the narrative in its inmost sense, as relating to the Lord Himself in His Humanity, it may be desirable, in pursuing the subject of it, to view it more in its inner sense, as relating to ourselves, as the subjects of that regeneration which is the image of His glorification, and for the sake of which He assumed our frail and fallen nature, and did and suffered all that humanity could do and suffer, that He might bring us, by doing and suffering, to participate in the glory into which He entered. Profoundly instructive and impressive it is to see something of the inmost sense of the Word, and of the Lord's great and merciful work in the flesh, as the origin and archetype of our own ; but it is too high for us to dwell long or exclusively upon it with advantage. It is generally sufficient, and even more profitable, to view the Lord's glorification as reflected in the mirror of human regeneration.

When Samuel came to Saul, Saul said unto him, "Blessed be thou of the Lord : I have performed the commandment of the Lord. And Samuel said, What meaneth then this bleating of the sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear ? And Saul said, They have brought them from the Amalekites : for the people spared the best of the sheep and of the oxen, to sacrifice unto the Lord thy God ; and the rest we have utterly destroyed." Saul, as appears from his subsequent confession, was aware that he had not, in this, wholly followed the Lord, and yet he combines with his holy salutation of Samuel the voluntary assurance that he had obeyed the Lord's commandment ; and when the prophet demanded of him, "What then meaneth the bleating of the sheep and lowing of the oxen ?" how ingeniously does he put the case for himself : "*They* have brought them from the Amalekites ; the rest *we* have utterly destroyed"! As the natural man is eager to obtain reward, so is he anxious to escape blame ; and just so far as he claims merit for the good, he refuses to take blame for the evil. Yet there is a spiritual truth expressed in this. In the early states of the regenerate life the natural mind knows and yet does not know the truth in regard to merit and blame. It knows theoretically but not practically. One of the earliest and easiest of our religious

lessons is, that, as God is the Author of all good, we can claim no merit for goodness ; and that as we do evil from freedom, we can have no excuse for sin ; and yet we may feel proud of our virtues and not be ashamed of our vices. There is an important and most practical doctrine of the Church on this subject. If we believed that all good is from heaven and all evil is from hell, we would neither appropriate the merit of good nor the guilt of evil. It is by regarding good as our own that we claim the merit of it, and it is by regarding evil as our own that we try to excuse or justify it ; and thus refuse to take the demerit which belongs to it. Saul represents one whose natural mind is still in this state. But when light from the Lord enters through the spiritual mind, this state is seen, and a perception of it comes to the natural mind itself. When Saul had offered his explanation, Samuel said to him, " Stay, and I will tell thee what the Lord hath said to me this night. And he said unto him, Say on. And Samuel said, When thou wast little in thine own sight, wast thou not made the head of the tribes of Israel, and the Lord anointed thee king over Israel ? " The true condition of the mind in the earlier stages of the regenerate life is for the will to be under the direction and control of the understanding, which is meant by Saul being little in his own sight. He then reminds Saul of the commission he had received respecting the Amalekites, and tells him how imperfectly he had discharged it ; but Saul still maintains that he had obeyed the voice of the Lord, and had gone the way which the Lord had sent him, and had brought Agag the king of Amalek, and had utterly destroyed the Amalekites : but the people had taken of the spoil, sheep and oxen, the chief of the things which should have been utterly destroyed, to sacrifice unto the Lord in Gilgal. It was then that Samuel uttered that memorable saying, " Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt-offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord ? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. " Worship is one of the duties we owe to God ; but it is only a means to an end : and the end of all Divine worship is that we may be strengthened to do the Divine will. God requires mercy and not sacrifice, and the knowledge of God more than burnt-offering. The ceremonial law was given for the sake of the moral law ; and the institutions of worship are, still more under the New Testament dispensations than those of the old, aids to the performance of the duties of the moral law. It is well to serve the Lord in worship, but to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.

But if worship, in its pure and holy state, is secondary and auxiliary to a pure and holy life, what can be said of that worship which is founded upon a violation of the Divine commandments ? Is not worship sometimes offered to God as a substitute for obedience to His will ? When penitence is in the heart prayer will be upon the lips ;

for from the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. But even then the offering itself must be pure. The sacrifices under the law were required to be without spot or blemish. For the animals offered on the altar represented the good affections of the human mind ; and these should be offered to God unspotted by the world and the flesh. The sheep and oxen of the Amalekites could not represent pure and innocent affections. In themselves they might be free from ceremonial blemish, but they were tainted by the moral corruptions of their owners. They had been devoted to destruction : how could they be offered in sacrifice ? The old man with his lusts is to be crucified ; the new man with his affections is to be sacrificed. These are the two great aims of the spiritual warfare and the ultimate condition of the spiritual life. They were those of the Lord Himself. It was when He was crucified as to the old man, or the frail humanity He inherited from Mary, that He offered Himself up a living sacrifice as to the new man, or the humanity He derived from the Divinity. This complete glorification of the Lord, and the corresponding complete regeneration of man, could not be represented in this act, and did not indeed belong to the reign of Saul. Therefore Samuel announces to him, that as he had rejected the word of the Lord, the Lord had rejected him from being king. This was not the first but the second time that the prophet had declared to him the forfeiture of his kingdom. And it is worthy of remark that in the first instance it was for assuming the function of the priesthood in himself offering a sacrifice, when he should have waited for Samuel to perform that sacred duty ; while on the present occasion it was for proposing to offer a sacrifice which could not be accepted, but would in its nature be abomination to the Lord. When his dethronement was announced to him, Saul relented. "Saul said unto Samuel, I have sinned : for I have transgressed the commandment of the Lord, and thy words : because I feared the people, and obeyed their voice." This is the second time that the will of the king has been overruled by the voice of the people. In rescuing Jonathan from the consequences of the rash vow of Saul the people were right ; in taking of the spoil which Saul was commanded to destroy the people were wrong. In both we have a representative of that state of mind when its lower principles rule the higher, as when the passions rule the intellect, and desire overcomes the sense of duty. In the present instance we see the result in Saul sparing the king and the flocks. The highest and the lowest, or the primary and the ultimate principles of things are the most important ; and when these are spared of that which should be destroyed utterly, the work of extermination, however sweeping, is greatly incomplete. When Saul confessed his sin, he prayed Samuel to pardon it, and to turn again with him that he might worship the Lord. "And Samuel said.

unto Saul, I will not return with thee: for thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, and the Lord hath rejected thee from being king over Israel. And as Samuel turned about to go away, he laid hold upon the skirt of his mantle, and it rent. And Samuel said unto him, The Lord hath rent the kingdom of Israel from thee this day, and hath given it to a neighbour of thine that is better than thou." Had Saul rended his heart when he rent the mantle of Samuel, his sin might have been forgiven and the kingdom of Israel might have been secured to him; but it is evident from the sequel that his repentance was not deep, and that a sense of shame was as great as his sense of guilt. Again he confessed, "I have sinned;" but now he asks not for pardon from God, but for honour before men. "Honour me now, I pray thee, before the elders of my people, and before Israel, and turn again with me, that I may worship the Lord thy God. So Samuel turned again after Saul; and Saul worshipped the Lord." In all this we see the external character of the truth which Saul represented, whether we consider the subject in relation to the Lord in the progress of His glorification, or to man in the progress of his regeneration. Of Samuel we have here an instance of that which in relation to the Lord is called repentance. He first refuses to return with Saul, and then complies with his repeated entreaty. It is a sign of mercy; but this was the result of a second prayer, which indicates that a change of state in the human mind produces an apparent change of purpose in the Divine mind. The real truth is, that the Lord is mercy itself; but His mercy cannot be operative in man until man is in a state to receive it. It was now, therefore, that an important act was done, which but for Samuel's turning again with Saul, would have been left undone. "Then said Samuel, Bring ye hither to me Agag the king of the Amalekites. And Agag came unto him delicately. And Agag said, Surely the bitterness of death is past. And Samuel said, As thy sword hath made women childless, so shall thy mother be childless among women. And Samuel hewed Agag in pieces before the Lord." As Agag represented the internal of that of which the Amalekites were the types, of falsity grounded in interior evil; and Samuel represented the internal of that which Saul and the Israelites were the types, which was truth grounded in interior good; therefore Samuel slew Agag, to teach us that an evil or false principle can only be destroyed by its opposite good or truth. A true king of Israel would indeed have represented the opposite of a king of the Amalekites, for he would have represented the external in which was the internal; but it is evident that Saul did not; and from this circumstance he saved Agag alive.

And all this may be acted over again after another manner. May not the Christian disciple, who has received the command to forsake

all, yet desire to retain a part, and endeavour to serve God and Mammon? May he not do what many have done, seek to propitiate the Deity by giving Him a portion of his unrighteous gains? And seeking by his worship and service to reconcile God to himself, rather than to reconcile himself to God, may he not thus ask to be absolved from the guilt, rather than purified from the stain of sin? In addition to all this, and as a necessary result of it, he will seek the praise of men more than the praise of God. All this may be drawn from the narrative regarded in its literal sense. But in the interior or spiritual sense, which resides within that of the letter, we may trace in the particulars of the history the state and operations of the mind within itself in times of spiritual conflict. How insidious are the evils of our own hearts which we are commanded utterly to destroy! These are the men and women, infant and suckling, sheep and oxen, camel and ass: the men and women, infant and suckling, are the thoughts and affections of the inner man; and the sheep and oxen, camel and ass, are the corresponding affections and thoughts, knowledge and science, of the outer man. A seemingly still more unnatural and terrible duty is imposed on the Christian disciple in the Gospel, in the demand which is made upon him to hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, and his own life also, or he cannot be the Lord's follower. The spiritual duty imposed upon us both by the law and the Gospel is that of crucifying the old man with his affections and lusts, that the new man may live. But how arduous is this duty! what is more difficult than to lay down the very life with all that makes life enjoyable? Yet the life that is to be surrendered, the life of our corrupt selfhood, is opposed to the true life which we receive by regeneration, and which alone can secure to us either present or future happiness. No wonder we should be in danger of yielding to the influences and suggestions of our own natural will and understanding, to stop short of utter extermination, and save a remnant of our congenial, and perhaps cherished, natural loves and delights. How faithful a type is Saul of the natural mind rendered feeble and vacillating by the influence of its lower affections and thoughts, suggesting views of expediency or self-interest, as Saul was by the people! But the spiritual mind, the inner man, like Samuel, sees from a higher elevation, and is able to remain uninfluenced, unless it be sorrowfully, by the feeble character and vacillating conduct of the natural mind below. The outer man may fall short or yield, but the inner man remains in his integrity. And through the inner man the Lord speaks to the outer man, disclosing to him his frailties and failures and their unhappy consequences. The real nature and operation of the mind we may know by our experience. It is one of the characters by which the human is distinguished from the merely animal nature. Animals cannot look into their own minds,

because the animal mind, whatever power it may possess, has no reflex action ; but man can look into and judge of the state and operations of his own mind. In the relation before us we, therefore, see outwardly represented that Divinity-created constitution of our nature which enables us to reflect upon ourselves, and to know, that we may judge and control, the lower propensities and imaginations of our own minds.

In compliance with Saul's entreaty Samuel turned again with him to worship ; but the offering could not have been taken from the spoil of the Amalekites, but must have been supplied from the flocks of Israel, as representing the true affections to be offered in worship. Then, when the inner and outer man are so far united, that which had been left undone or incomplete can be done or completed. It was after they had worshipped together that Samuel commanded Agag the king of the Amalekites to be brought forth. "And Agag came unto him delicately, and said, Surely the bitterness of death is past. And Samuel said, As thy sword hath made women childless, so shall thy mother be childless among women. And Samuel hewed Agag in pieces before the Lord in Gilgal." Our expositor remarks that "in these words of Samuel to Agag lie deeply concealed the cause of the Divine imprecation upon Amalek, that the Lord should have war with him for ever, and his name should be blotted out from under heaven. Agag going delicately signifies external allurements which the malignant spirits whom the Amalekites represented practise before others. Samuel's words, 'thy sword hath made women childless,' signifies that their falsities do violence to the good affections ; 'thy mother shall be made childless among women,' signifies that among them there would prevail evil affections derived from the will and not from the intellect ; and Samuel's hewing him in pieces before the Lord, signifies that they were separated from those who are in the falsity of evil derived from the intellect ; thus genii are separated from spirits, as formerly stated." It is easy to see the application to persons in this world. But it is above all things necessary to search and try whether, and how far, it applies to ourselves. And knowing that the principle of interior evil, however it may be concealed from men, is against the throne of God, and that the Lord must have perpetual war against it, we should war against it also until it is consumed. As we learn from the history of Israel, the evil is too deeply seated to be effectually overcome in one conflict ; though subdued it will rise up again and again. But every earnest effort to subdue it will weaken its power, and prepare for its name or nature being finally blotted out from under the heaven of the regenerated mind.

Samuel and Saul now parted never to meet in the flesh again. Each went to his own birthplace and his own home ; the truth which

each represented thus retiring into the interior of the spiritual and natural mind to which they respectively belonged. But although all outward intercourse between them ceased, sympathetic connection was not entirely broken off. Samuel mourned for Saul. The thought and affection of the inward man mourn over the frailties and shortcomings of the outward man. That may not restore the object of his sorrowing to the state, the loss of which he mourns. Notwithstanding Samuel's mourning, the Lord still repents that He had made Saul king. The truth Divine in the maternal humanity, which Saul represented, is at variance with the good of the Divine love, which cannot find in it a permanent dwelling-place, and a perfect medium of manifestation in overcoming hell and ordinating heaven, and establishing a spiritual Church on earth. Such a permanent dwelling-place and medium are to be found in another and higher principle, which the Lord Himself is to provide ; the inauguration of which forms the subject of the next chapter.

CHAPTER IX.

SAMUEL ANOINTS DAVID KING OF ISRAEL.

1 Samuel xvi.

SIXTEEN years had passed away since Saul and Samuel parted ; when a message came from the Lord to the prophet, saying, " How long wilt thou mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel ? fill thine horn with oil, and go, I will send thee to Jesse the Bethlehemite : for I have provided me a king among his sons." We have already pointed out the distinction between the representative character of Saul and David, one representing truth Divine, the other Divine Truth. Truth Divine, we have seen, is truth which is Divine in its origin, but finite in its recipient ; but Divine Truth is Truth that is Divine both in its origin and in its recipient. We have further seen that the history of Saul is, in the inmost sense of the Word, descriptive of the process by which the Lord made His Humanity truth Divine, while the history of David describes the process by which the Lord made His Humanity Divine truth. Our attention is now to be drawn to the singular circumstance of there being at the same time two kings of Israel. Saul, though rejected as king, was still permitted to reign for a considerable period after David had been anointed in his place. This gives rise to some of the remarkable and touching incidents in that part of the history which now commences

and continues till the death of Saul. Many of the particulars related respecting Saul and David are exceedingly interesting as presenting strikingly true and instructive views of human nature. But they are still more interesting and instructive as representative descriptions of the states and experience of those who are passing through a certain stage of the regenerate life, and of the Lord Himself in a corresponding stage of the glorification of His Humanity. While they both held the regal office, Saul was king actually, and David was king potentially. During most of the time that this continued, Saul was the enemy and persecutor of David, while David was the friend and preserver of Saul. And even when his enemy had fallen, the event which placed David actually upon the throne drew from him a lamentation overflowing with the tenderest affection and the noblest sentiments.

The reason of David's being chosen and anointed king during the reign of Saul, and of there being thus at the same time two kings of Israel, will be seen by considering the Divine economy of man's regeneration, especially in that stage of its progress to which the history of Saul in his connection with David relates. "During the process of man's regeneration, he is kept by the Lord in a kind of mediatory good, which serves for introducing genuine goods and truths, but after these goods and truths are introduced it is separated from them. Every one who has any knowledge of regeneration can comprehend that the new man is altogether other and different from the old; for he is in the affection of spiritual and celestial things, which constitute his delights and blessednesses; whereas the old man is in the affection of worldly and terrestrial things, which constitutes his delights and satisfactions. Thus the new man has respect to ends in heaven, but the old man to ends in the world. Hence it may be manifest that the new man is altogether other than and different from the old. In order that man may be led from the state of the old man into the state of the new, the concupiscences of the world must be put off, and the affections of heaven must be put on. This is effected by numberless means, which are known to the Lord alone, and of which some are known also to the angels from the Lord, but few, if any, to men. Nevertheless all and each of these means are manifested in the internal sense of the Word. While, therefore, man from the old is being made into the new man, that is, while he is being regenerated, this is not, as some suppose, effected in a moment, but by a process of several years' continuance, nay, of a man's whole life, even to its latest period; for his concupiscences are to be extirpated and heavenly affections are to be insinuated, and he is to be gifted with a life he had not before, and of which he previously had hardly any notion. Since, therefore, the states of his life are to be so much changed, he must needs be kept for a considerable time in a kind of middle good, or in

a good which partakes both of the affections of the world and of the affections of heaven, and unless he be kept in this middle good, he in no wise admits heavenly goods and truths. Man, however, is kept in this middle good no longer than until it has served the above use ; and when this is ended, it is separated. That there is a middle good, and that when it has served its use it is separated, may be illustrated by the changes of state which every one undergoes from infancy to old age. It is known that the states of man in infancy, in boyhood, in youth, in manhood, and in old age are different and distinct from each other. It is also known that man puts off the state of infancy with its playthings when he passes into the state of boyhood, and that he puts off the state of boyhood when he passes into the state of youth, and this again when he passes into manhood, and lastly this when he passes into the state of old age. Now if he weighs the matter well, he may know that each age has its delights, and that by these delights he is successively introduced to the subsequent age, and that these delights are servicable in bringing him thither, and at length to the delight of intelligence and wisdom in old age. Hence it is manifest that former things are always left when a new state is put on. This comparison, however, can only show that delights are means, and that these are left when man enters into a subsequent state, whereas during man's regeneration his state becomes altogether other than and different from the foregoing, and he is led into, not in a natural but a supernatural manner by the Lord ; nor does any one arrive at that state except by the means of regeneration which are provided by the Lord alone, thus by the middle good of which we have been speaking."

This long extract, though it relates to a specifically different subject, sheds a clear light on that which is treated of in the internal sense of the present history. The contemporaneous existence in the mind of natural and spiritual affections and perceptions of truth, and the opposition of the lower to the higher, is represented, with a difference according to the subject, in various parts of the Word. It was represented by the two sons of Isaac, Jacob and Esau, by the two wives of Jacob, Leah and Rachel, and by the two sons of Joseph, Ephraim and Manasseh ; and is represented by the two kings of Israel, Saul and David. These two kings together in Israel represented, then, that condition of the regenerate man when the spiritual mind has been opened to the reception of Divine truth, but has not yet acquired dominion over the natural mind, and removed from it the apparent truths and their delights which belong to the natural mind. Saul's conduct towards David describes that of the natural towards the spiritual man. Saul first regarded David with favour, when he overcame Saul's foe, but when he knew that he had been anointed king he became his enemy. The natural agrees with the spiritual while

they are in concurrent action ; but the natural conflicts with the spiritual whenever its dominion is threatened. Saul's hatred and persecution of David represents the repugnance and resistance of the natural man to the rule of the spiritual ; for all the hatred of Saul to David, and his schemes to destroy him, arose from the knowledge that he had been anointed and was designed to be king. The anointing of David forms the first and principal subject of the present chapter.

Samuel is commanded to go unto Jesse the Bethlehemite, and anoint one of his sons, whom the Lord had provided to be king in the place of Saul. Samuel, who had mourned for the disobedient king, now expresses his fear that Saul, if he hear it, will kill him, on which he is desired to take a heifer with him, and say he is come to offer a sacrifice. Although, in the literal sense, this sacrifice seems as if it were intended to disarm suspicion, yet, in the spiritual sense, that which the heifer and the sacrifice represented are necessary for the preservation of the principle of which Samuel was the type. The heifer signifies the good of innocence and charity in the natural mind ; and its sacrifice represented conjunction by that good with the Lord, and hence the preservation of internal truth. It was also a means of preparing for conjunction with the Lord the spiritual good and the truths proceeding from it, which were represented by Jesse and his sons, who were sanctified and called to the sacrifice. When the sons of Jesse were introduced one by one to Samuel, beginning at the eldest, all were rejected, till they came to the youngest, the first being last and the last first. When Samuel beheld the eldest, pleased with his person, the prophet was eager to anoint him ; but he was checked by the Divine words, " Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature ; because I have refused him : for the Lord seeth not as man seeth ; for man looketh on the outward appearance, literally the eyes, but the Lord looketh on the heart." The next two sons were made to pass before him, then the others to seven, but Samuel was able to say that the Lord had not chosen them. Inquiring if these were all his children, Jesse told him there was yet the youngest, who was keeping the sheep. " And Samuel said unto Jesse, Send and fetch him : for we will not sit down till he come hither. And he sent, and brought him in. Now he was ruddy, and withal of a beautiful countenance, and goodly to look to. And the Lord said, Arise, anoint him : for this is he." The seven sons of Jesse that were made to pass before Samuel were refused, because, although they represented holy truths, they did not represent the Divine truth itself in all fulness and holiness in the person of the Messiah, which the second king of Israel was to typify. The ground of their rejection is expressed in the Lord's words to Samuel when he would have anointed Eliab, the eldest, because he was high of stature : " Man looketh on

the eyes"—men judge by the intellect ; " but the Lord looketh on the heart"—the Lord judges by the will. This was the ground of the Divine choice in the case of David. He was ruddy, for ruddiness or red is emblematical of love ; he was intellectual, which is expressed by his being fair of eyes, called beautiful of countenance ; and these were combined in outward goodness, which is meant by his being goodly or good to look to. We mean that these were outward qualities in him that represented inward qualities in the Lord, whom he represented. He was not indeed destitute of these qualities himself, although, like many of the dispensation to which he belonged, he held them lightly. His representative character is further expressed in his name, which means beloved. Truth is the beloved of goodness, but only when goodness is in it as its life and essence. This was the truth which David represented ; and this is the Truth which the Lord was. He was the Word ; in Him was Life. He was the infinite and eternal Truth, in whom was the infinite and eternal Love. Such was the Word which was made flesh, the Messiah, the Anointed. We have already, in speaking of Saul, mentioned the difference between him and David, in Saul being in search of his father's asses when he was led to Samuel, who anointed him king, and David being brought from the sheepfold to receive the sacred unction. There are other differences. Saul was born in Gibeah, and anointed in a nameless city ; while David was born and anointed in Bethlehem, the birthplace of our Lord Himself, and where the youngest son of Jacob and Rachel, the father of the Benjamites, was born. When Saul was anointed it was with a vial of oil ; when David was anointed it was with a horn of oil ; because the horn, besides being a vessel full of oil, and thus representing truth filled with love, was also an emblem of power ; and all power is in truth derived from goodness. Saul was anointed alone ; David was anointed in the midst of his brethren. Brethren signify the good charity, and in the midst is in the inmost. When the Lord, in answer to His disciples' question, who was the greatest in the kingdom of heaven, set a little child in the midst of them, and said, He that is converted and becomes as this little child, the same shall be greatest in the kingdom of heaven, He intended to instruct us that the central quality of greatness is innocence. The Lord condescended to call those same disciples brethren, but He was careful to instruct them that only those who did the will of His Father in heaven were His mother, and sister, and brother.

When Samuel had poured upon the head of David the holy oil, the sacred symbol of love to God, the Spirit of the Lord came upon him from that day forward. The Spirit of the Lord which was given to men under the law, and the Holy Spirit under the Gospel, was not

necessarily a regenerating spirit. It did not always produce graces in the heart, but was a supernatural influence adjoined to those who were invested with a sacred office. But although the Spirit that came upon kings and priests, and which they received on their formal appointment to their high office, was not a regenerating spirit, it represented the spirit of regeneration, when inwardly received by those who are made unto our God kings and priests, and who shall reign with Him for ever and ever.

But when the Spirit of the Lord entered into David, the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the Lord troubled him. So far as Saul represents one who has departed from the Lord, we have in this simple statement a description of the spiritual condition into which he comes. The spirit of good leaves those who forsake the paths of righteousness ; and when the spirit of good leaves them, the spirit of evil enters into them. The evil spirit that entered into Saul is said to have come from the Lord. This is according to the appearance that God is the Author of all things good and evil. In a certain sense it is true. Nothing exists but what has its first origin in God. But God did not create evil as evil, but as good. Every evil that exists is some good perverted. Evil spirits were created good ; they have made themselves evil. But the evil spirit that troubled Saul is said to have been from God. This an apparent truth, and yet in a certain sense it is really true. The Lord has the keys of hell, and it is under His control. He does not send evil spirits, but He permits them to come, so far as their coming is necessary for the exercise of human freedom, and they can be made conducive to a useful purpose. In their present state men could not exist without connection with evil spirits, nor can they be regenerated without their agency. Evil cannot be removed unless it is seen and felt, and it cannot be seen and felt unless it be excited, and it cannot be excited without the agency of evil spirits. This is the use of their presence with the good. The evil do not thus profit by their presence. But as the evil draw evil spirits into connection with themselves, the Lord's providence is exerted to prevent, as much as is consistent with the freedom of the human will, the overruling power of attendant evil spirits. The law of Divine permission is also a law of love and wisdom, and the law is this, that the Lord permits a lesser evil to prevent a greater, and therefore permits evil spirits of a less malignant character, to prevent the presence of others who would of themselves take entire possession of men, and enslave them beyond redemption.

While the Lord permits evil spirits to be present with men, He provides good spirits and angels to be attendant on them, to moderate the influence and counteract the effects of the evil angels, and, as far as possible, to turn their evil into good, by inspiring a hatred of evil

and a love of goodness. These good spirits and angels are like David with his harp; they awaken and strengthen the good affections and repress and weaken the evil affections, and, so far as this is done, drive away the evil spirits who excite and inflame them.

It was to his musical gift, and the cunning of his right hand which gave it expression on the harp, that David owed his first introduction to Saul. Saul's servants entreated their lord to let them seek out a cunning player on the harp, that he might play with his hand when the evil spirit was upon him, and make him well. Saul consented; and one of his servants having commended a son of Jesse, as a cunning player, and a mighty valiant man, and prudent in matters, and a comely person, whom the Lord was with, "Saul sent messengers unto Jesse, and said, Send me David thy son, which is with the sheep." When Jesse sent his son with gifts to the king, "David came to Saul, and stood before him: and he loved him greatly; and he became his armour-bearer. And Saul sent to Jesse, saying, Let David, I pray thee, stand before me; for he hath found favour in my sight. And it came to pass when the evil spirit from God was upon Saul, that David took an harp, and played with his hand: so Saul was refreshed, and the evil spirit departed from him." There is something of the romance of history in David's first connection with Saul. But that seemingly fortuitous concourse of circumstances by which interesting but otherwise unlikely events are brought about, is but a faint image of the combinations by which Divine Providence works out its eternal ends, making all agencies and all things work together for good to them that love God, to them that are called according to His purpose. The servants of Saul are the mediatory truths and goods which, by their connection with both the spiritual and the natural in man, bring them together, that the higher may correct the disorders of the lower; while the bread and the wine and the kid, that David brought from Jesse as a present to Saul, are the good and truth and innocence by which the spiritual man seeks to propitiate the natural. The favour of Saul was obtained. David stood before him, and he greatly loved him; and he became his armour-bearer. Thus is described the state of the natural man when the spiritual is an object of right thought and warm affection, and becomes invested with the doctrinal truths, which are the weapons of warfare the natural man is to use against his enemies, but which, in his evil moods, he may, like Saul, use against his friends. But the chief occupation of David, in which he performed at this time the greatest service to Saul, was that which enabled him to exorcise the evil spirit. What this evil spirit was, that could be overcome and driven away by the influence of music, has been a subject of speculation. The nature of the Israelitish dispensation explains this. All effects were then produced by correspondence. There is no reason to

doubt that Saul's case was of the same nature as those recorded in the New Testament, where we read of evil spirits possessing and ruling over men, both as to mind and body ; and that David exorcised the evil spirit of Saul, as the Lord cast the evil spirits out of those who were possessed. The means by which David quieted the spirit of Saul had this power, as we shall see, from correspondence. Saul's case differed from that of the possessed when our Lord was in the world in this respect, that he had a succession of attacks and deliverances. Yet our Lord instructs us that the evil spirit, when he has gone out of a man, may return with seven other spirits more wicked than himself. If we may judge from Saul's acts, the evil spirit acquired more and more influence over him as time went on. These alternations of possession and deliverance, like the alternations of sinning and repenting, harden the heart, and render the conscience more and more callous, till it is seared as with a red-hot iron. The evil that alternates with good is of a more malignant character than that which exists where good has never been. It draws men down into greater depths of iniquity and intenser suffering, until they end, like Saul, in defeat and self-destruction.

But to consider this part of the history as representing, not the actual commission of evil, but only the temptation to commit it, the Spirit of the Lord recedes into the inner man, and the evil spirit enters into and excites the concupiscences of the outer man, or natural mind. The acts into which Saul was seduced by the demon that possessed him, are fit representatives of the evils to which the natural man is inclined, and through which the Christian disciple is tempted by evil spirits. But in the function of David, in ministering to the diseased mind of Saul, we see the means by which such temptations can be overcome and such sins avoided. When our minds are troubled with thoughts of evil and not of good, and our spirits are oppressed with care and sorrow, arising, it may be, partly from natural and partly from spiritual causes, the music that descends from the spiritual affections, through which Heaven pours its melody of celestial love and peace, dissipates the gloom, calms the troubled spirit, and restores the mind to tranquillity and gladness. The natural mind, prone to the earth, and acted upon by its ends and influences, is subject to the changes of state which are imaged by those of the outer world. The natural mind, like the natural world, has its day and night, cold and heat, summer and winter ; its lights and shadows, its storms and calms. In its dark and troubled states it becomes the sport of evil spirits, who find in these states their congenial element. Whenever we are under the influence of evil, whether it agitates our own minds only or threatens to burst forth in acts of hostility to others, the remedy is to be found in letting the

sweet influence of the angels, who are ever present in our inner man, ready to descend into the outer man, and sweep the cords of our better thoughts and affections, and bring forth from them the subduing, soothing; and inspiring strains, whose origin is in the soul itself that has been attuned to the harmony arising from the union of love and faith, as they breathe in the atmosphere of the heaven of angels, and of that heaven which exists in the inmost of every regenerate mind. Besides these ministering spirits whom the Lord provides, He gives us of His own Spirit. The Holy Spirit, the Spirit of truth, is poured out upon all flesh. It is like the sunshine and the rain of heaven; it descends upon the evil and the good, the just and the unjust. All that is required of us is to open our hearts and minds to receive its light and influence. We may refuse it, we may close our hearts against it, and yield ourselves up to the undisputed rule of the evil spirit. God does not force us, because force is inconsistent with the freedom with which He has endowed us. But He desires and entreats us to receive His free Spirit, that it may cast out the evil spirit, which is the spirit of bondage, because it is the spirit of doubt, of discontent, of pride, of hatred, of malice, of whatever is of the devil, and enable us to sit down in a sound mind, and with a believing and loving heart.

But the evil spirit is not entirely dispossessed at once. After he has departed, he will return again and again. Of our Lord Himself it is recorded, that when, in the wilderness, the devil had ended all his temptations, he departed from Him for a season. In this respect the disciple is not above his Master. And what must we do when the evil spirit returns? We may learn from what David did. "It came to pass when the evil spirit from God was upon Saul, that David took an harp, and played with his hand: so Saul was refreshed, and the evil spirit departed." In every time of trouble, or rather terror, which means temptation, we must turn to the Lord, who will speak peace to the soul. "He is the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star." And whoever looks to Him in times of darkness and distress, will find Him as the day-star arise in his heart. And those angelic spirits, who are all ministers of grace, will inspire the heart with that tranquillizing love, of which they are the recipients, and the mediums of conveying to their yet labouring brethren upon earth. They sympathize with us in all our states, both of sorrow and joy. There is joy in heaven over every sinner that repenteth; and at the new birth of every human soul the morning stars sing together and the sons of God shout for joy.

Every particular trouble that afflicts the mind has its ground in some particular principle of evil or error, and the remedy must be adapted to it by the law of opposites. The temptation represented by the terror of Saul is one that arises from the "evil spirit" of the

affection of what is false ; and the means by which this spirit is exorcised is the affection of truth. Of this affection David's harp is the symbol. Of the various musical instruments mentioned in the Word, wind instruments signify affections of goodness, and stringed instruments affections of truth. The harp is the most common Scripture symbol of this affection, and is represented as being used in heaven as well as upon earth. When the Lord is worshipped by the angels of the spiritual heaven, or from the spiritual affection of truth, that worship is representatively exhibited in the spiritual world as praising Him upon the harp. As such worship brings us into closer connection with the Lord and heaven, it draws us away from evil spirits and out of the sphere of the kingdom of darkness. Eminently the Word itself is the harp, and its truths are the harp-strings from which the Divine hand brings forth the sounds that charm away the evil spirit that exerts its hateful power over the mind. And they do this whenever they find a responsive feeling in the affections of the human mind. The truths of the Word have power only when they are objects of mental perception and affection ; and can only, therefore, support us in temptation and deliver us from evil when they are sincerely believed and loved.

In every one who is passing through the regenerate life there are, in a certain stage of his progress, a Saul and a David, one troubled with an evil spirit, and the other able, by the harmony of united truth and goodness, to dislodge the evil spirit. The outer man is corrupt and too ready to yield to evil influences. But when the inner man is in such a state as that Divine and heavenly influences can descend through the affections into the mind below, the evil can be successfully opposed and finally cast out. In the progress of the Christian life this will be our experience. The evil spirit will come upon us. When we feel its influence, let us turn to Him who alone can deliver us ; He who has tuned the whole universe to harmony, is able to remove the discord which sin has introduced into the human mind, and restore it to the harmony which, in common with other parts of creation, it originally enjoyed.

CHAPTER X.

DAVID'S VICTORY OVER GOLIATH.

1 *Samuel* xvii.

ONE leading object of the Word of God is to teach us that great things can be accomplished by small and seemingly inadequate means. In

the Old Testament it is a promise to the righteous that one shall chase a thousand, and two shall put ten thousand to flight (Deut. xxx. 10), which was literally fulfilled in some of Israel's extraordinary deliverances ; and in the New Testament it is said, that God hath chosen the foolish things of this world to confound the wise ; and God hath chosen the weak things of this world to confound the things that are mighty (1 Cor. i. 27). The lesson which this teaching inculcates is an all-important one, that all power belongeth unto God, and that while to Him all things are possible, all things are likewise possible to him that believes. This truth is strikingly exemplified in the defeat of Goliath, the gigantic and panoplied champion of the Philistines, by the youthful and unarmed shepherd of Bethlehem ; and which resulted in the overthrow of the whole Philistine army, and the deliverance of the Israelitish people from the galling yoke of these powerful enemies.

But these are more to us than historical facts, extraordinary and interesting as they are, and instructive as evidences of the intervention of a higher than human power on behalf of the chosen nation. The narrative acquires a truly spiritual character and conveys a great practical lesson, when the conflict and victory it relates are seen to represent states of the Church in the course of her history, and of the human mind in the progress of its regeneration. In the Church and in the minds of her members are we to look for the armies of Israel and of Philistia, and for the champion of the Philistines, clothed in his mailed panoply, defying the armies of the living God, and for David, with his shepherd's staff and his sling and his stones, as the seemingly incapable instrument of effecting the deliverance of his people. The army of Israel represents the Church as consisting, not only of the numerous members who unitedly form the body of the faithful, but of the numerous principles which unitedly form the faith itself, by virtue of which the Church, either individually or collectively, exists. When the Israelites are called the armies of the living God, they represent the principles of goodness and truth which constitute the Church, as derived from and connected with Him who is goodness itself and truth itself, and as they are disposed in true order by Him who is order itself. And when this arrangement includes the militant idea which an army suggests, we are to consider the armies of the living God as opposed to a combination of principle opposite and hostile to those of the true Church. The Philistines, we have seen, represent in a general sense the persuasion, and the desire in which it originates, that happiness may be attained by an easier and shorter way than purity of heart and holiness of life, by seeming rather than being, by thinking and believing rather than doing. In religion this takes the form of the doctrine of salvation by faith without the deeds of the moral law ; and, when carried to its legitimate consequence, it

becomes in practice the form of godliness without the power thereof. This, though found within the Church, is one of its greatest enemies, because it is entirely opposed to vital religion, without which the Church is but a form and a name. But the Philistine principle, as we have had occasion to remark, is not necessarily limited to those who hold the doctrinal opinion, nor is it always acted out by them. Whoever holds it practically holds it actually, whatever his creed may be. The inclination to it is inherent in us all, and the temptation to yield to it is one from which none are exempt. It is an enemy which it is difficult fully and finally to conquer. It returns upon us again and again, and it requires all our watchfulness and courage to prevent it from obtaining complete dominion over us. Those who hold the doctrine both intellectually and morally are themselves Philistines, and are opposed to the armies of the living God. One feature which this condition of mind is exceedingly liable to present is intellectual pride. This arises from the fact that great dialectical skill and training are required to reconcile the doctrine with the teaching of the Word, which insists so much on the necessity of love and charity, and so emphatically declares that every one shall be judged according to his works. The whole theology of one branch of the Church is founded upon a single passage in the writings of St. Paul, misunderstood—that we are justified by faith without the deeds of the law; and this underlies the whole of its systematic teaching. This doctrine is grafted on the idea that Jesus Christ fulfilled the law and died for the breach of it in our stead, so that we are saved by faith in His vicarious life and death. The false theological science by which this is supported is that kind of knowledge which puffeth up; for whatever is of man tends to self-exaltation, however unconscious one may be of the nature of his own belief and of the means by which he upholds it. This intellectual pride is the Goliath, the champion of the Philistines, that defies the armies of the living God, and that challenges them to produce a man that can fight with him. And the armour with which he was covered, and the weapons with which he was armed, are the arguments by which the false principle defends itself, and which it employs to overcome the arguments that are opposed to it.

The existence of giants is one of the interesting particulars of sacred history. An indication of their origin and character is afforded in the fact that their first existence is mentioned at a period when mankind had come into a state of great spiritual corruption, which was immediately before the Flood; and that they are never spoken of except as the enemies of God and His people. All the Churches that existed before the Lord's coming were representative. Their inward state was manifested, not only, as with us, in its moral effects, but in its physical representatives. Among these was lofty stature, as the fitting

representative of intellectual pride ; while the terror which these giants inspired in the minds of others, as fitly represented the power which a pretentious intelligence exercises over those who are unable clearly to discern between the proper function of the intellect, which is to understand and confirm truth, and its perverted use, which is to frame congenial errors and give them the appearance of being true. Within the Church erroneous doctrines on religious subjects are based upon and confirmed by the literal sense of the Word ; and it is in consequence of this that they have so great an influence on religious minds, the authority due to the Scriptures being naturally ascribed to that which is supposed to be derived from them. But how is it that the Scriptures of truth should afford the means of framing and confirming error ? The literal sense of the Word consists, to a great extent, of apparent truths, in which theological errors, which originate in the human mind, find their chief support. When the apparent truths of Scripture are made the foundation and test of religious doctrine, they invalidate the real truths of the Word, from which all doctrine should be drawn and by which it should be established ; and human wisdom is never at a loss to confirm by reasons what it claims to rest upon authority. Those reasons are the armour and weapons, by which the giant prepared himself for the conflict with any champion whom the army of Israel could provide. The minute description of his armour is no doubt intended to convey an idea of the character of instruments of spiritual warfare which the enemies of the Church employ in their assaults upon her principles. The meaning of the several parts of Goliath's armour, which is the most complete suit mentioned in the Bible, may be gathered from the description of Christ's armour by Isaiah, and of the Christian's armour by St. Paul. Speaking of our Lord, the prophet says, " He put on righteousness as a breastplate, and an helmet of salvation upon His head ; and He put on the garments of vengeance for clothing, and was clad with zeal as a cloke " (lix. 17) ; and the Apostle exhorts the Christian disciples " to put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness ; and your feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace ; above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God " (Eph. vi. 11-17) ; and in another place he says, " Let us, who-

are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love ; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation" (1 Thes. v. 8). The Lord came on earth as a Man of war as well as the Prince of peace ; for He had to conquer the powers of darkness before He could give peace to His people. What is the armour which the Infinite put on when He assumed human nature ? The head, the breast, and the feet of the Lord, which are spoken of in the Word, are His Divine celestial, Divine spiritual, and Divine natural ; or, His Divine love and wisdom as accommodated to the angels of the three heavens, and to those on earth who are in communion with them. The helmet of salvation which He put on is the Truth by which He defended the celestial, and the righteousness which He put on as a breastplate is the Truth by which He defended the spiritual. No armour for the lower part of the body is mentioned, because truth natural in the Lord's Humanity lay open to the assaults of the enemy ; therefore in the first production of His becoming the seed of the woman, where His conflict with the tempter is spoken of, it is said that whilst the Redeemer should bruise the serpent's head, the serpent should bruise His heel : and David, in describing the Lord's sufferings, makes Him say, "They pierced My hands and My feet." Truth natural, such as it was in the Lord's maternal humanity, and such as it is in the letter of the Word, is truth clothed with appearances, which can be pierced and wounded by false and sinister interpretations, and of which vengeance and zeal are predicated. What, then, is the Christian's armour ? It must be analogous to that of the Captain of his salvation. His helmet is the truth that defends the highest of his Christian graces, which is love to the Lord ; and his breastplate is the truth that defends that grace which is like unto it, which is love to the neighbour. Faith is the shield that affords general protection to the Christian virtues from all the assaults that evil can direct against them ; and the Word of God, which is the sword of the Spirit, is the weapon by which he overcomes all that opposes itself to the truth and righteousness of the Gospel of Christ.

We may now have some clear idea of the symbolic character of the several pieces of the armour of the gigantic champion of the Philistines. For the means by which the cause of error is maintained, though different in essence, are similar in form to those by which the cause of truth is upheld. Every error claims to be the truth, and draws its weapons of offence and defence from the same armoury which supplies weapons for defending and maintaining the truth. The Scriptures are the common source of all religious evidences, but heresy misinterprets and perverts its true teaching, and thus falsifies its truths, so far as its principles require it. "The warfare of those who are in error is not therefore against the Word itself, for this they call holy and Divine, but it is against the real truths of the Word ; for they confirm their

falsities from the Word understood as to the letter only, which in some parts is so expressed that it may be interpreted to confirm the most heretical opinions, because in that sense it is according to the apprehension of the young and the simple, who for the most part are sensual, and receive such things as appear before the eyes. The Word in the letter being such, those who are in falsities from evil of life confirm their falsities from the Word, and so falsify the Word. The Word is thus falsified by those who separate faith from charity, as, for example, whenever doing or deeds and works are mentioned, they explain all such passages, of which there are thousands, as if nothing of deeds or works were meant." The helmet, the coat of mail, and the greaves of the giant are the falsities framed or fabricated from the apparent truths of the Word, to resist and invalidate the teaching of its real truths respecting love to the Lord, charity to the neighbour, and good works, these being meant by his armour for the head, the breast, and the legs and feet. The shield is the general means of defence of the false faith, the opposite of and defence against the true. Besides this defensive armour, Goliath had a spear, a javelin, and a sword. The second of these instruments is called a target, but, singularly, in other passages where the word occurs, it is translated spear or lance (as in Josh. viii. 18, 26 ; Jer. l. 42). The weapon is understood to have been a heavy javelin. Thus the spear, the javelin, and the sword were three offensive weapons, answering to the three parts of the defensive armour, the helmet, the breastplate, and the greaves. The defensive armour was of brass, and the offensive was no doubt, as the spear-head is said to have been, of iron. Brass and iron correspond to natural good and truth, and in the opposite sense, as they must be taken here, of natural evil and falsity. One other particular is mentioned respecting the spear, that its staff was like a weaver's beam. Literally, this gives an idea of its immense size, but, spiritually, it expresses the nature of that which it represents. "A weaver signifies the celestial principle, or that which relates to the will, because the will flows into the understanding and fashions it, insomuch that the things which are in the understanding are woven out of the will." Wood and iron, which formed the staff and head of the spear, in the genuine sense correspond to good and truth, and therefore in the opposite sense to evil and falsity. The falsity in the understanding which is fashioned and formed out of evil in the will is the head of Goliath's spear, the staff of which was like a weaver's beam. One other particular given respecting the several parts of the armour of the giant is their weight. And as we are here to deal with numbers, we may take into the account the stature of the giant. His stature was six cubits and a span ; his coat of mail weighed five thousand shekels, and the head of his spear six hundred shekels. Weight and stature correspond to the

state of a thing as to good or evil, and the number by which the weight or stature is expressed signifies the quality of that state. Six is a number expressive of combat, chiefly because, in relation to the regenerate, the six days of labour which precede the Sabbath, signify all the states of labour and conflict through which the Christian has to pass before he enters into a state of rest. As the regenerate fight against evil and falsity, the unregenerate fight against goodness and truth. This is the combat, therefore, which is expressed by the six cubits stature of the giant and the six hundred shekels weight of his spear-head. But the height of the giant was six cubits and a span. The cubit is a measure based upon the length of the forearm, and the span upon the length of the hand. The height of the champion is thus expressive of the pride which says, Mine own arm and my own right hand shall gain me the victory. The weight of the coat of mail was five thousand shekels. Five, as consisting of two and three, is expressive of the union of goodness and truth, which these numbers signify; but as things are here to be taken in their opposite sense, the union of evil and falsity is to be understood. A hundred and a thousand do not alter the meaning of the simple numbers, but only exalt them. How great, then, must be the combined power of the evil and false, which opposes itself to the principle of charity, as one of the partners of faith in the heavenly marriage of goodness and truth, that not only secures but constitutes salvation!

Such, then, as presented in its most distinct and complete representative form, is the gigantic heresy, or rather principle, of Faith alone as the ground and hope of salvation. We wish to be understood as speaking of the principle, not merely of the doctrine. The doctrine is both the effect and the cause of evil; but only those who are in the principle are really of the army of the uncircumised, or are represented by its champion.

The challenge which the giant daily uttered in the hearing of the Israelitish army, to give him a man that they might fight together, found no response. Saul, whose great height emulated that of the giant, and who was not deficient either in bravery or skill, perhaps partly regarded the champion as not entitled by rank to be met in single combat by a king. Certain it is that when Saul and all Israel heard the defiant words of the Philistine, they were dismayed, and greatly afraid. The fear of man is present so far as the fear of God is absent. Both the people and the king were to some extent in this condition. But the time of the people's deliverance was not yet come, for he by whom they were to be delivered was not yet made manifest to Israel. But that time is now at hand. David, the anointed but yet uncrowned king of Israel, is about to appear, to accept the challenge and be the conqueror of their otherwise unconquerable enemy.

There follows now a long account, not unattended with difficulties, of David's coming to the Israelitish camp, having been sent by his father with provisions for his three eldest brothers, who had followed Saul to the battle. Seeing the men of Israel flee in terror from the champion, when he uttered his usual challenge, and hearing that "the man who killeth him, the king will enrich him with great riches, and will give him his daughter in marriage, and make his father's house free in Israel," David expresses his contempt for the great boaster, "for who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God?" These words are rehearsed to Saul, who sends for David. And he from the sheepfold at once says to the king, "Let no man's heart fail because of him; thy servant will go and fight with this Philistine." Saul might well have his fears, and represent to David the unequal match in which he proposed to engage. "Thou art not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him: for thou art but a youth, and he a man of war from his youth." But David's experience as a shepherd inspired him with just confidence in his ability to cope with the man of war. "Thy servant kept his father's sheep, and there came a lion, and a bear, and took a lamb out of the flock: and I went out after him, and smote him, and delivered it out of his mouth: and when he arose against me, I caught him by his beard, and smote him, and slew him. Thy servant slew both the lion and the bear: and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them, seeing he hath defied the armies of the living God." David's occupation, his experience, and his confidence in his own power, were representative of those of David's Lord. He kept His Father's sheep. The sheep were indeed His own, but His Father gave them Him; and no man was able to pluck them out of His hand (John x. 28, 29). David's conflict with the lion and the bear, and his rescue of the lamb, represented the Lord's conflicts with the powers of darkness, and the deliverance of the human race from their devouring jaws; for is not the devil described as a roaring lion, walking about, seeking whom he may devour? The lion and the bear are symbols of the devil and Satan, by whom our Lord was tempted in the wilderness, when, it is said, He was with the wild beasts (Mark i. 13). There is something peculiar in David's account of his encounter with the wild beasts, which he slew. It would seem as if they had both attacked his flock at once, and then he says he slew *him*. The rescue of the lamb, alive as we infer, out of the mouth of the lion and the bear, is also extraordinary; while his catching him by the beard, and smiting and slaying him, is worthy of Samson. No doubt the particulars relate to one of them, or to each of them singly; but it may be concluded that the appearance is that of one encounter, to make it a more exact representative of the Lord's temptation at the same time by the devil and Satan, which are but different names for

the whole powers of hell, but being, like the lion and the bear, expressive of the powers of evil and of falsity. The rescue of the lamb alive was also required to make it the type of the deliverance from death of those whom Satan had made captive, and desired to rend in pieces and devour.

Great as the strength must have been to seize and slay two such powerful beasts of prey, the unarmed shepherd does not claim the merit of his victory. "David said moreover, The Lord that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, He will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine." This was the ground of his confidence. The Lord said, "I can of Mine own self do nothing" (John v. 30), "but the Father that dwelleth in Me, He doeth the works" (xiv. 10). The Lord's confidence was in the constant presence in Him of the Father; so that He could say, "I and the Father are one" (x. 30). The Divine in the human was the source of His power and of His victories.

Saul, satisfied with these proofs of David's courage and prowess, not the less that he relied on God for strength, said unto him, "Go, and the Lord be with you." But the king was not disposed to allow his youthful champion to encounter the giant, as he had encountered the lion and the bear, unarmed. "Saul armed David with his armour, and he put an helmet of brass upon his head; and he also armed him with a coat of mail. And David girded his sword upon his armour." But Saul's armour did not suit David. "He assayed to go; for he had not proved it. And David said unto Saul, I cannot go with these; for I have not proved them. And David put them off." This is one of those Scripture incidents which, though not supposed to have a spiritual meaning, are used in a figurative sense. The spiritual sense is not accidental but inherent, and is the teaching, as it is of the inspiration, of the Spirit itself. We may first consider it with reference to Saul and David in their highest representative character. Divine truth could not go into the battle with the armour of truth Divine. As truth Divine, the Lord fought against the enemies of the Church and of heaven with the apparent truths of the Word; as Divine truth He fought against them with the real or genuine truths of the Word. He even led His disciples at times by apparent truth, as when He promised them that, in the regeneration, they should sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. The armour of Saul represented the apparent truths of the Word, but in their pure and simple state, as opposed to the same truths in their corrupted and perverted state, as represented by the armour of Goliath. This armour would have been suitable on the person of Saul, but it was not suitable on the person of David. David had, indeed, put on the armour of Saul, or rather Saul had put his armour upon David, and David himself put it off. All

that was imperfect, even the appearances of truth, came to him from without, but he put it off by his own will and power from within. David, however, did not go with Saul's armour, but put it off, because he had not proved them. The Lord, as Divine truth, had not proved apparent truth as armour to be trusted in the day of battle; but it was because He saw that no proving would make it a fit instrument for Him in those conflicts in which, as truth Divine, He could not have conquered. Saul, with all his armour, did not venture to engage with the Philistines; and David, who had undertaken to meet their champion, would not fight with him in Saul's armour, but chose instruments less warlike, but, in his hands, more effective. "He took his staff in his hand, and chose him five smooth stones out of the brook, and put them in a shepherd's bag, even in a scrip, and his sling in his hand." How simple his equipment for engaging in a conflict with such an opponent, and on the result of which hangs so great an issue! But his means, he knew, were sufficient for the end. So knew the Lord, in His conflicts with a far more powerful enemy, and on the issues of which depended, not the freedom or servitude of Israel, but of the whole human race. And so knows, or at least confides, the Christian, when he has to encounter the foes that would bring him again into bondage to error or sin, from which the truth has made him free. The shepherd's staff is that of which David afterwards sung, "The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want. Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me." He leans on and confides in the power of the Divinity and not in his own—on the Lord's goodness and wisdom, not on his will and prudence. But David had to provide himself with the means of active resistance; and he chose five smooth stones out of the brook. The word here translated brook sometimes means a valley, as the bed of a stream; but as a brook is its primitive meaning, we may take this as the basis of the spiritual sense, supposing there be any uncertainty as to whether David took his stones from the mountain torrent or its dry bed. Those which David chose were at least the water-worn stones of the brook. These smooth stones out of the brook represented plain truths out of the Holy Word. Brooks, streams, and rivers—like fountains and wells, pools, lakes, and seas—are symbols of the Holy Word, not only as revealed in a book, but as received in the mind. There the distinction exists between running, sometimes called living water, which signifies truth in the understanding and the life, and standing water, which signifies truth in the memory. The brook out of which David chose his five smooth stones is the Word, as the origin of an intelligent and living faith, and therefore opposed to a traditional and dead faith.

There are some particulars respecting these stones that deserve

attention. They were smooth stones. An intelligent and practical faith does for truths, even for those that are to be employed in defence of the faith, what the waters of the brook do for the stones over which they run—it takes off their angles and asperities, and makes them round and smooth, imparting to truth the form and quality of goodness. The stones were five in number, to indicate that such truths unite in themselves the qualities of goodness and truth. They were chosen, to teach us that truths are to be discriminated and selected, so as to be suitable for the use to which they are to be applied. They were put into a shepherd's bag, or a scrip, to indicate to us that truths must be laid up into doctrine until they are required for the uses of life.

There is something remarkable in our Lord's teaching respecting the scrip. When He sent forth His disciples on the peaceful mission of preaching the Gospel, He told them to take no scrip ; but when, on the night of the passover, He warned them of the approaching conflict with the powers of the world, He says to them, " He that hath a purse let him take it, and likewise his scrip ; and he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment and buy one." The scrip is thus associated with a state of warfare ; and in David's conflict with Goliath it must signify the doctrinal form which is suited to accompany and contain truths destructive of falsities and evils. But David had, as he required, an instrument for projecting the stones he had chosen out of the brook. A sling has the same meaning as a bow ; and a bow signifies doctrine combating, as a quiver, like a scrip, signifies doctrine containing. Doctrine has two main uses. It gathers up and combines the various truths relating to one subject that lie scattered throughout the Scriptures. Doctrine for this use is the scrip into which the stones are gathered, the quiver in which the arrows are placed. But doctrine has a further use ; it gives direction and force to truths when they are to be employed in combating error and evil ; and then it is the sling and the bow.

Thus armed, David goes forth to the conflict. He drew near to the Philistine, and the Philistine came and drew near to David. And the Philistine said unto David, " Am I a dog, that thou comest to me with staves ?" Sometimes men in asserting their dignity describe their own character, and this the Philistine does, for the uncircumcised represent the sensual, and this is the Scripture meaning of a dog. The Philistine displays his representative character further by cursing David by his gods, which is to blaspheme the truth from the falsity to which the heart and mind are devoted. He also utters the seemingly reasonable but falsified boast, " Come to me, and I will give thy flesh unto the fowls of the air, and to the beasts of the field ;" which is an expressed intention of giving the good of truth to be torn and devoured by the

thoughts and lusts of the carnal mind. David's answer to the gigantic boaster is one of noble simplicity, but of unreserved trust in God, to whom he ascribes the glory of the confidently expected victory. "Thou comest to me," says the shepherd youth, "with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield : but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied. This day will the Lord deliver thee into mine hand ; and I will smite thee, and take thine head from thee ; and I will give the carcasses of the host of the Philistines this day unto the fowls of the air, and to the wild beasts of the earth ; that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel. And all this assembly shall know that the Lord saveth not with sword and spear : for the battle is the Lord's, and He will give you into our hands." This was not the language of confidence merely, but of prophecy. No one could speak in this manner but to whom it had been revealed. It reminds us of the Lord's saying to Peter, "Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven." It was also prophetic in a higher sense ; for David speaks as a worthy type of the coming Redeemer, whose name was the Lord of hosts. We shall see the meaning of David's language in the event itself.

When the Philistine arose and came and drew nigh to meet David, David hasted and ran toward the army to meet the Philistine. "And David put his hand in his bag, and took thence a stone, and slung it, and smote the Philistine in his forehead, that the stone sank into his forehead ; and he fell upon his face to the earth." The result of this stroke is extraordinary, but it is not, we believe, incredible. At the same time we must not forget that such feats of strength and skill, in that representative dispensation, had both a supernatural cause and a supernatural meaning. The spiritual world, which is the world of causes, is also the world whence comes the light which reveals those causes. In the light of the spiritual sense of the Word we are enabled to see that David's easy victory by such simple means represented the Christian's victory over opposing error and evil. However formidable in itself, and rendered seemingly invulnerable by reasonings and perversions of Scripture, the plain and simple truths of the Word, applied by pure doctrine, can overcome them. To the complexity of error nothing can be so successfully opposed as the simplicity of truth. The essential principles of religion are so plainly revealed in the Scriptures that the simplest mind can understand them ; and if the Christian disciple can only rest in the conviction that the battle is the Lord's, and that error can only be overcome by Divine truth, as revealed in God's Word. We could find as many essential truths opposed to the error of faith alone as there were stones in the scrip of David, any one of which would be sufficient to condemn it. "Love

the Lord above all things ; love thy neighbour as thyself ; he that hath My commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me ; if thou wouldst enter into life keep the commandments ; for we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, to receive every one according to the deeds done in the body, whether they be good or whether they be evil." Any one of these truths is capable of penetrating the head and front of its opposite and opposing error. The forehead corresponds to the highest and inmost of the mind, and therefore to any truth or error in its first principles. The beast in the vision of St. John, which symbolized the same false persuasion that the Philistine represented, caused his followers to receive his mark in their right hand and in their forehead¹ (Rev. xiii. 16) ; that is, inwardly in their minds, and outwardly in their lives. The forehead of the giant is, therefore, the interior of the falsity he represented, and to cause the stone to sink into his forehead, is to cause the truth to penetrate into the inmost of falsity, and destroy its dominion over us. And we do this in ourselves when we apply the truths of the Lord's Word, not only to the words and actions of our lives, but to the thoughts and intentions of our hearts.

But David's triumph was not yet complete. When he had slain the giant, he ran and stood upon him, as a mark of subjugation, like placing the foot upon the neck of an enemy. And he took the giant's sword, and cut off his head. His turning the giant's sword against himself exemplified the Lord's words, "He that takes the sword shall perish by the sword." It is a spiritual law, invariable in its operation, that he who takes the sword of falsity to fight against the truth, shall perish by it. Though not more certain, yet more terrible is the death, when the falsity is a direct perversion of the truth. The literal sense of the Word is a sword that turns every way to guard the way of the tree of life ; and any doctrinal error that is founded upon the appearances of truth in the letter, and held in simplicity and sincerity, does not of necessity destroy spiritual life ; but when elaborate reasonings are employed to confirm error and invalidate the truth, because error favours evil and truth condemns it, then those who maintain the unholy conflict shall be as the wicked who have drawn out the sword, and "their sword shall enter into their own heart" (Ps. xxxvii. 15).

David's victory over Goliath had its natural effect upon the two hostile armies, who had been spectators of the unequal contest. "When the Philistines saw their champion was dead, they fled. And the men of Israel and of Judah arose, and shouted, and pursued the Philistines." The Israelites chased the Philistines to the gates of Ekron ; and the wounded of the Philistines fell down by the way of Shaaraim, even unto Gath, and unto Ekron. Shaaraim was a city of Judah, and means two gates ; Gath was the birthplace of Goliath, and

means a wine-press ; and Ekron was the chief city of one of the Philistine gods, and means uprooting. From all these particulars we learn that when the leading principle fails or succeeds, the common principles give way or acquire new vigour. In this instance truth and good are elevated in the thoughts and affections, and go forth in words and deeds, which result in the expulsion of falsity and evil from the interior which they had invaded, and forced back to the uttermost part of the exterior which they still possessed, and where their idol gods still maintained their dominion ; for Ekron had been given by lot to Judah (Josh. xv. 11, 46), although the Philistines still held it, representing a state in which evil is not yet removed from the external man, though destined to be uprooted even there, by means of passing through the gates of knowledge and the wine-press of temptation. It is in the way to these that the evils and falsities, which the avenging sword of truth has disabled, fall down powerless to oppose the progress of righteousness.

While the army of Israel was pursuing the panic-stricken hosts of Philistia, David was on his way to Jerusalem with the head of Goliath. It has been asked why David should take his trophy to a city of which the Jebusites still held possession. David was to be the conqueror of Jerusalem ; and it may well be that he should carry the head of the champion of the arch-enemy of Israel to the city which was to be the capital of the kingdom over which he was to rule. The armour of the giant he put in his tent. The armour of Goliath represented things in themselves good and true, because obtained from the armoury of the Word, but perverted by being applied to an evil use. When these become the spoil of the good they return to their original state of being true, because they are to be used for the defence of good and not of evil ; they can therefore be laid up in the mind, as David put the armour of which he had stripped Goliath in his tent.

Saul, who had seen David go forth against the Philistine, was anxious to know, and sent Abner the captain of his host to inquire, whose son the stripling was. "As David was returning from the slaughter of the Philistine, Abner took him, and brought him before Saul with the head of the Philistine in his hand. And Saul said to him, Whose son art thou, young man ? And David answered, I am the son of thy servant Jesse, the Bethlehemite." It is considered difficult to understand how David, who had been Saul's armour-bearer, and had been accustomed to play before him on his harp, should now be entirely unknown to him. It has, therefore, been proposed to omit or transpose a part of the chapter. As there is no critical ground for objecting to any part of the narrative but its seeming inconsistency, there can be no sufficient reason for rejecting a part of Holy Writ ; but there may be other and higher reasons for retaining it. There may be a spiritual

cause why David should now seemingly for the first time become known to Saul. David was now a new man. He was no longer the armour-bearer of the king, but the hero of a great conflict. He had slain the terrible warrior and scattered the hosts of the enemy; and he came into Saul's presence with the head of the giant in his hand as a sign of his irresistible power, which was soon to shake the heart of the king himself.

CHAPTER XI.

THE FRIENDSHIP OF JONATHAN AND DAVID.

1 Samuel xviii.

WITH the exception of Joseph's love for his brethren, there is nothing of the same character in the Old Testament so pure and noble as Jonathan's love for David. In their case, differently from that of Joseph and his brethren, the love was mutual. Drawn to each other by an essential similarity of character, brought out by the accomplishment of a great national deliverance dear to them both, their souls were knit together in the closest and most enduring friendship. If there is a greater resemblance to Joseph in one of these devoted friends than the other, it is in Jonathan, whose warm and generous love involved one of the noblest acts of self-abnegation which mortal man can perform, and of which history records not a more disinterested instance. It was on David's return from the field, where he had defeated Goliath, and where in consequence the whole Philistine army had been overthrown, that the patriotic soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David, and that the expectant heir to the throne of Israel "stripped himself of the robe that was upon him, and his garments, even to his sword, and to his bow, and to his girdle, and put them upon David," transferring by this significant act his prospective regal authority and power to one who had shown himself so able to vindicate the honour of Israel, and maintain the cause of the Lord.

While the history before us supplies this singularly beautiful instance of lofty patriotism and disinterested friendship, it furnishes likewise, as if to exalt them by contrast, a no less striking instance of base ingratitude and deep malignity. Saul, whose honour David had vindicated and whose kingdom he had possibly saved, though he showed at the moment a becoming favour for the youthful warrior, by whose pious bravery it had mainly been effected, yet, after the first generous impulse, he became, except during brief gleams of remorse, his bitter and implacable enemy. In their triumphal return from the

battle-field, where so great and unexpected a victory had been wrought for Israel, the women sang, "Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands;" which evoked in the heart of the king the spirit of jealousy and envy, "and he eyed David from that day forward." From that day, too, the harp of David seems to have lost its power to charm away the evil spirit from the mind of Saul, who henceforward became so infuriated against the innocent object of his hate, that he endeavoured, while David was giving out his sweet sounds, to strike him with a javelin to the wall. Everything that Saul now did to David, even the favours he bestowed upon him, were meant for his destruction. He charged his son and his servants to kill him; and when Jonathan strove to remove his father's unjust suspicion and disarm his fierce wrath against his friend, he himself incurred his hot displeasure, and was subjected to the same abuse and assault. Under all these trying circumstances Jonathan's love for David remained unshaken; and after providing, on several occasions, for David's safety, the two friends bade each other a tender and final farewell.

In drawing attention to these features of the narrative, it may seem that I retain the mind too long and engage it too deeply in the literal sense. It is possible, however, to pass over the simple sense of the letter too lightly, as it is to dwell on it too exclusively. It is true that the moral instruction of the Old Testament Scriptures does not always appear on the surface, and that some of the acts that are recorded with commendation or without reproof it would be dangerous to follow as examples. But where the literal sense delineates character or records acts that are calculated to make virtue beautiful and vice hideous, it is but right, as it is useful, that we should give ourselves unreservedly to its study, that by admiring, we may be led to imitate, what is lovely and of good report, and by detesting, we may be led to avoid, what is base and dishonourable. Besides, the literal sense of the Word is designed for the young and the simple, whose thoughts and feelings are to a considerable extent limited to the sphere of the senses, and to the imagination, which is in immediate connection with them. And the capacities and wants of these, as well as those of their more advanced fellow readers and students of the Bible, require to be ministered to.

From the very different character and conduct of Saul and his son Jonathan much useful instruction may be derived. Their personal interests in the kingdom were the same; yet how different were their ideas and conduct in relation to it! Both of them had no doubt learned that David had been anointed king; and as pious and obedient Israelites they should have submitted humbly, if not cheerfully, to the will of Him whose kingdom Israel really was, and who had the right to give it to whom He pleased. Jonathan did so, not only from piety

to God but from friendship to David, while Saul's personal and paternal feelings revolted against the claims of both. From the conduct of Jonathan we may learn the highly important lesson, that we should subordinate our personal feelings to the will of God and our private interests to the public good, and be ready to recognise excellences in others without any self-consideration ; while from the conduct of Saul we should be warned against the vices of ingratitude, envy, and jealousy. This much may we learn from the history in its plain literal sense. The spiritual sense teaches a still higher lesson.

By the light shed upon the historical circumstances of the Scriptures by the internal sense, we are enabled to see in this narrative a Divine and spiritual meaning.

The first three kings of Israel represent, we have seen, the Lord while making His humanity truth Divine, Divine truth, and Divine good. Saul represented the Lord while making his humanity truth Divine, or truth from the Divine, as it comes down to finite apprehension, as it is in heaven among the angels and in the world among men. Strictly speaking, there is no absolute truth but in the Divine Being. Pure truth transcends the apprehension of the highest intelligences, because it is infinite, and between infinite and finite there is no proportion, there is only correspondence. In the Word, therefore, there are the three finite degrees of truth, the natural, the spiritual, and the celestial, and within and above these there is a truth purely Divine. But although there is no absolute or pure truth with finite beings, there is with them truth relatively real and apparent. In heaven there are appearances of truth, but these are what may be called real appearances, being the forms which real truths assume when they present themselves as objects of sense ; but as they only exist in connection with the states that produce them, they are understood, and never mistaken for the realities which they represent. On earth it is different. Apparent truths do not here proceed from and exist in connection with the real truth relating to the same subject in the minds of men ; and therefore they are constant, and are the same to one as they are to another. The appearance that the sun rises and sets is constant and common to all men, to those who know and to those who do not know the real truth. It is from this condition of things on earth that the literal or natural sense of the Word contains so many apparent truths. For if even natural truths clothe themselves in appearances, how much more spiritual truths, when they come down into the natural world, and present themselves to the natural minds of men.

Saul and Jonathan, we consider, represent the apparent and the real truths of the Word, as they exist in the literal sense. According to this view we can see the reason why David refused to go into the battle with the armour of Saul, but did not refuse to put on and wear

the robe and the weapons of Jonathan after the battle was won. David represented Divine truth, such as it is above the heavens. And the Lord, as Divine truth, did not put on and fight from the apparent truths of the Word ; or rather, He did as David did with the armour of Saul, He put it on, and assayed to go, but put it off again, and took His own simple weapons, on which man had not lifted his tool and shaped by his own intelligence. But although the Lord did not put on and fight from the apparent truths of the Word, He put on its real truths when the conflict was over and the battle won, and exalted and glorified them by union with Himself, as Divine truth. In this light also we can see the cause and meaning of the almost constant and growing opposition of Saul to David ; for the more the Lord was perfected, and the more His humanity was made Divine truth, the greater the difference between Divine truth and truth Divine became manifested, and this divergence continued and increased until the apparent was entirely removed. But we must turn our attention from this exalted view of the subject to that lower and corresponding one which relates to ourselves.

Keeping in view the principle of interpretation which brings the whole history within the scope of individual experience, Saul, David, and Solomon represent Divine truth as it exists successively in the minds of those who are progressing in the regenerate life, or as they successively advance in the affection and perception of the Lord's truth from natural to spiritual, and from spiritual to celestial. The history of the reign of Saul represents the regeneration of the natural mind, or degree of the mind. Thus Saul may be regarded as representing the natural mind itself, as he personally showed much of the character of the natural man. But Saul in relation to Jonathan represented the natural mind in its first state in relation to the natural mind in its second state, or, what amounts to the same, apparent truth in relation to real or genuine truth in the natural mind.

In the progress of regeneration the human mind is being continually perfected, and this perfecting process is effected by successive steps as well as by imperceptible gradations, a more perfect principle or state being produced by means of one less perfect. The natural mind in its first state regards spiritual things from affections and thoughts which partake more of self and the world than of the Lord and heaven, more of fear than of love ; and not until the birth of the new and higher motive does the kingdom of righteousness begin to be established in its true order in the mind. The natural mind in its first state may be regarded as being imaged by Saul, and in its second state by Jonathan. The natural mind in its first state, while ruled by the appearances of truth, is fitly represented by Saul ; in its second state, when it comes under the direction of genuine truth, it is fitly represented

by Jonathan. The natural mind in its first state is at enmity with the spiritual, as Saul was with David; in its second state it is in harmony and unity with it, as Jonathan was with David. When the successive states of the mind are thus understood, the circumstances of this part of the history of the kings will be clearly seen and may be usefully applied.

Jonathan's soul was knit to the soul of David as soon as the youth had made an end of speaking unto Saul, when he appeared in the monarch's presence with the head of Goliath in his hand. The conquest of that delusive persuasion, that heaven and happiness can be secured by the name and form without the reality and power of godliness, is that which knits the soul of the natural to that of the spiritual, and unites them by an indissoluble bond. "He that hath My commandments and doeth them, he it is that loveth Me: and he that loveth Me, shall be loved of My Father, and We will come and make Our abode with him." "Love is the fulfilling of the law." Faith without loving and doing is faith without life; for faith without works is dead. The heaven to which such faith looks forward is a place of rest, not from labour but from work. Such a life would be insipid and wearisome. It would neither be useful nor happy. The rest into which the righteous enter after death is the peace which is obtained by victory over the errors and evils of their natural thoughts and inclinations. But a state of spiritual rest may be, to some extent at least, secured and enjoyed even in this life. And indeed there may be inward peace while there is outward trial; just as our Lord, when He bestowed peace upon His disciples, warned them that in this world they should have tribulation. There is inward peace when the soul of the natural mind is knit to the soul of the spiritual, when there is an internal agreement between them, even before the outward evils of the natural mind are removed, the presence and activity of which cannot but cause tribulation. It is love with its works that brings the natural into harmony with the spiritual; and the first and most necessary work which is required for this end is the conquest of the evils and falsities which produce enmity and separation between them.

When the soul of Jonathan had been knit to the soul of David, and the heir of Saul had invested the future king of Israel with the insignia of his regal status, they entered into a covenant with each other, thus bringing into a practical result the love and union that inwardly existed between them. This covenanted friendship must have been sweet and comforting to the soul of David during the time of the bitter and disheartening treatment he experienced at the hand of Saul. So with the Christian. It is the covenanted union that exists interiorly between the inward and outward man that enables him at the time to bear, and afterwards to rejoice in, spiritual persecution. Nay, it is this inward

state that prepares him for undergoing persecution ; for spiritual trials are incident to those only who delight in the law of God after the inward man, but have another law in their members warring against the law of the mind. This other law soon began to act in the case of David. The exaltation of the law of God in the affections of the inward man, which are the women answering one another in their song in praise of David more than of Saul, awakens in the outer man feelings of wrath and displeasure, and the fear of losing the supremacy which the natural man still claims as his own and is unwilling to lose : "What can he have more than the kingdom?" This state of the will enters into the thoughts, which are constantly directed to this source of danger, as Saul eyed David from that day and forward. Another and worse state follows ; as on the morrow the evil spirit from God came upon Saul. When we give way to bad feelings, evil spirits enter into us and rule over us. They secretly excite the evils of the will and suggest false thoughts in the understanding. The falsities they insinuate are intended to have the appearance of truth, and are indeed truths falsified. Satan tempted the Lord through the truths of His own Word. It is always so. We are tempted through the appearances of truth. These are bent out of their right course, so as to give a seeming sanction to the indulgence of congenial evil—so, in fact, as to make evil appear as good. The evil spirit that entered into Saul caused him to prophesy. It seems singular that an evil spirit should confer the prophetic gift. We find indeed that Balaam, though a soothsayer, had the gift of prophecy, but could not prophesy more or other than the Lord permitted. Prophets were teachers as well as predictors of events. As false prophets could utter true prophecies, so can false teachers teach true doctrine. Whatever was the nature and subject of Saul's prophesying, the fact itself is not inconsistent with his being possessed by an evil spirit. An enlightened, or at least an instructed understanding may be connected with an impure heart, so that a man may utter true sayings while meditating dark deeds. This possibility is permitted for wise purposes. The normal state of man is to speak as he thinks and act as he wills. This was his original state. But when the heart became depraved, it was necessary to emancipate the understanding from the absolute control of the will, so as to enable a man to look into his own heart, and see its state, and control its unruly motions. Yet this very gift may be abused, for a man may now employ his thoughts to conceal his intentions, or to carry them out with greater ingenuity. Saul could therefore prophesy in the midst of his house, while he meditated smiting David to the wall with his javelin, and which he attempted even while David played with his hand as at other times, to drive away by his sweet strains the evil spirit with which Saul was possessed. David

avoided out of his presence twice, to mark the immunity from harm that results from the combined power of a good heart with a true understanding.

From being an object of hate David now became to Saul an object of fear, "because the Lord was with him, and was departed from Saul." This is not the fear that precedes love, but the fear that supplants it; that which occupies the centre of the mind, while love is removed to the outside. Therefore Saul removed David from him, and made him his captain over a thousand. This was not intended although it proved to be a means of increasing David's power and his favour with the people, while it represented the growing influence and power of the spiritual over the natural in the regenerate mind. For the state here represented is that in which the spiritual is subject to the natural, but in which the natural by its own acts undermines its own power. It is true of the mind as well as of the world, "The wrath of man shall praise Thee, and the remainder of wrath shalt Thou restrain" (Ps. lxxvi. 10). The opposition of the human to the Divine, and of the natural to the spiritual, tends to strengthen and exalt them. David could not but prosper, for the Lord was with him, because he behaved himself wisely in all his ways, and all Israel and Judah loved him because he went out and came in before them. When the highest and the lowest are with us who can be against us? If the inward man behave wisely in all things, and act consistently in all states of life from beginning to end, there can no evil befall him, but good must be in and around him. As David became more an object of love with the people, he became more an object of fear with Saul. Another scheme was now, therefore, formed for his destruction. Saul proposed to give David his eldest daughter in marriage, but he made the gift conditional on his fighting the Lord's battles; for he said, "Let not mine hand be upon him, but let the hand of the Philistines be upon him." Saul had two daughters, and they remind us of the two daughters of Laban, Leah and Rachel. Unlike Jacob, David did not marry both the sisters. The eldest, who had been promised to David, was, for no assigned reason, given to another; but the youngest, who loved David, was offered to him on condition of his giving Saul as a dowry a hundred foreskins of the Philistines. Michal, like Rachel, represented an internal affection for truth: we can hardly call it spiritual, in the sense that the affection was which Rachel represented; for Michal partook too much of the character of Saul. That which she represented was rather an inner natural affection. Nor is it said that David loved Michal, but only that Michal loved David; so that there was not the mutual affection between them that there was between Jacob and his beloved Rachel. Yet David did not slight the idea of being the king's son-in-law, but joyfully agreed to the condition on

which he was to win Michal as his bride. When David had escaped safely out of the snare that Saul had laid for him, and had slain twice the number of Philistines demanded of him, Saul gave him Michal his daughter to wife. Saul had hoped to rid himself of David, but now he was more securely fixed than ever in his position in the kingdom, and still nearer to the throne. What must have been his feelings when the two hundred foreskins of the Philistines were given to him in full tale ! They might have taught him, what they represented, that he himself was uncircumcised in heart ; while David had obeyed by anticipation the command that was afterwards given, and which had always been included in the law of ordinances, " Circumcise yourselves to the Lord, and take away the foreskins of your hearts " (Jer. iv. ~~x~~). Such was evidently the opposite states of the two parties to this singular covenant ; and such is its lesson to us. No wonder " Saul saw and knew that the Lord was with David ; " but it does seem wonderful that, knowing this, and knowing that his own daughter loved him, Saul should yet be more afraid of David, and should become David's enemy continually. But such is the carnal mind which Saul represented. " The carnal mind is enmity against God : for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. " This mind is not and cannot be changed and made spiritual, but must be put off, and not by the natural process of decay, but by strife and violence.

CHAPTER XII.

JONATHAN VINDICATES DAVID FROM THE UNJUST SUSPICION, AND
MICHAL SAVES HIM FROM THE WRATH, OF SAUL.

1 *Samuel* xix.

FOILED in his attempts to slay David with his own hand, and in his device to make him fall by the hand of the Philistines, " Saul spake to Jonathan his son, and to all his servants, that they should kill David. " Singular request to make of so large a number, and one that, with other circumstances, bespeaks a mind that has lost its balance. Indeed, as Saul represented the natural man, he represented him as he was at the time of the Lord's advent, when the state of man was such that many were possessed with evil spirits, some of whom were lunatic and sore vexed. Saul shows evident symptoms in his future conduct of an unsound mind. One of the signs of mental aberration, in the earlier stages of the malady, is the capacity of being for the moment convinced by reasons, but almost immediately after relapsing into the

former delusion. Several instances of this occur in Saul's future history, one in the present chapter. But, considering Saul and Jonathan as representing the natural man in his two different states, one in which he judges outwardly according to the appearance, and the other in which he judges inwardly according to the reality, we see something besides the signs and operations of an unsound mind.

Judged according to the appearance, the spiritual seems opposed to the natural. Even worldly men think that religion is opposed to their best interests, although the very opposite is the truth. Jonathan's judgment respecting David was righteous judgment, because it was the judgment of real truth. "Jonathan spake good of David unto Saul his father, and said unto him, Let not the king sin against his servant, against David; because he hath not sinned against thee, and because his works have been to thee-ward very good: for he did put his life in his hand, and slew the Philistine, and the Lord wrought a great salvation for all Israel: thou sawest it, and didst rejoice: wherefore then wilt thou sin against innocent blood, to slay David without a cause?" This eloquent appeal, founded upon a truth eloquently powerful, could hardly fail to reach the king's understanding as well as his heart. "Saul hearkened unto the voice of Jonathan: and Saul sware, As the Lord liveth, he shall not be slain." Jonathan had told David that his father sought to kill him, and had counselled him to hide himself in a secret place until the morning, when he would tell him the result of his communing with the king. So in times of danger the spiritual principle hides itself in a secret place, by retiring into the interior of the mind, beyond the scope of external observation. When the morning of a new state came, Jonathan was able to tell David of the favourable result of his mediation, and to bring David to Saul; and he was in his presence as in times past. Thus by the influence of the middle principle are the spiritual and the natural reconciled, or rather, the natural is reconciled to the spiritual. In the present instance this reconciliation was but of short duration. "There was war again: and David went out, and fought with the Philistines, and slew them with a great slaughter; and they fled from him." What, to our seeming, should have confirmed Saul in his good resolution, served but to revive all his former animosity. Again "the evil spirit from the Lord was upon Saul, as he sat in his house with his javelin in his hand: and David played with his hand. And Saul sought to smite David even to the wall with the javelin; but he slipped away out of Saul's presence, and he smote the javelin into the wall: and David fled, and escaped that night." Saul had attempted twice before to smite David to the wall, and twice had David avoided out of his presence. This seems a more determined effort, for the javelin, though it misses David, goes into the wall; and David flees and escapes that night

never again to sweep the chords of his lyre in Saul's presence. To smite to the wall was not only to kill but to degrade. Spiritually it has a corresponding meaning ; for a wall is the external of that which the house itself signifies. As this was the house of Saul, who himself represented the natural man, it signifies the natural mind ; and to smite David to the wall would be to transfix the spiritual to the external of the natural, which would be not only to deprive the spiritual of life, but to deprive the natural itself of the power of being reformed and regenerated. It would have represented the sin of profanation, which consists in so immersing the spiritual in the unpurified natural, and so connecting the holy with the unholy, that the very capacity of restoration is destroyed. The representation of this was not permitted. David, when he had, for the third time, evaded the deadly attempt of Saul upon his life, fled and escaped. But although David escaped, his safety was not secured. When David escaped the javelin of Saul, and fled in that night, Saul sent messengers unto David's house, to watch him, and to slay him in the morning. In this emergency Michal does for him by her womanly stratagem what Jonathan had done for him by his manly wisdom ; she saves her husband's life, although she does not conciliate her father. Strange condition this in the regal household ! Is it not a fit type of that of which our Lord speaks ? " Think not that I am come to send peace on earth : I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household " (Matt. x. 34-36). The Lord was the innocent cause of this division, as David was of the division in Saul's household. And in the Lord's case, as in that of David, it was the old man that hated and opposed Him, and the new man that loved and befriended Him. In David's case there was also an anticipated exemplification of the Lord's concluding words, " He that loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me " (ver. 37). Jonathan and Michal did not love Saul less, but they loved David more ; and their greater love was founded in justice. It was Saul's own conduct that made his children his seeming foes.

When David fled from the presence of Saul, he went to his own home, and no doubt told Michal of this new outburst of the king's fury, and of the narrow escape he had made with his life. Seeing the messengers who had been sent to watch the fugitive, and divining their purpose, " Michal, David's wife, told him, saying, If thou save not thy life to-night, to-morrow thou shalt be slain." Thus it is, when, in the night of trial and temptation, which is the hour of the world and the power of darkness, the principle of spiritual truth is assaulted, it retires into its own habitation in the interior of the mind, where it

dwells with the principle of good with which it was first united in the heavenly marriage. From that good, or that affection, which is derived from the natural mind, the spiritual mind is able to look into the natural, and not only see the danger arising from its enmity, but the way of escape from its machinations. "So Michal let David down through a window : and he went, and fled, and escaped." A window is to a house what the eye is to the body and the understanding to the mind, it admits light, which makes objects both within and without visible. "The light of the body is the eye : if thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light ; but if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness." Thus our Lord by correspondence describes the understanding, which is the eye of the mind. But the Scriptures afford instances of the window itself having this meaning. When Jeremiah (ix. 21) says, "Death is come up into our windows, and is entered into our palaces, to cut off the children from without, and the young men from the streets," he describes, by analogy, the entrance of evil through the understanding into the will, and the destruction of all innocence and intelligence. When the spies went to view the land of Canaan, and the king of Jericho sent to Rahab, in whose house they lodged, to deliver them up to him, Rahab let them down by a cord through the window ; and in the window she bound a scarlet thread, which was a sign by which, when the Israelites took Jericho, they recognised the house, and were able to save her and her household. In this instance, too, the window was a symbol of understanding and intelligence, by which the designs of the wicked are frustrated, and good escapes the power of evil ; while the scarlet thread placed in the window, when Israel entered and took Jericho, was a symbolic sign that when there is charity in the understanding, or goodness in truth, or love in faith, there is protection and deliverance in times of judgment.

But there was something more to be done to provide for David's safety. His wife saw that if Saul's messengers knew that David had escaped they would pursue him. Therefore "Michal took an image, and laid it in the bed, and put a pillow of goats' hair for his bolster, and covered it with a cloth. And when Saul sent messengers to take David, she said, He is sick." The image which Michal employed as a means of deceiving the messengers of Saul seems to have been a sort of household god, possibly in the human shape. The *teraphim*, the untranslated word by which they are sometimes called, are the "images" which Rachel stole from Laban, when Jacob quitted the house of his father-in-law, who called them his "gods" (Gen. xxxi. 19, 30) ; and they were in the house of Micah's gods, which the Levite stole away. (Judges xvii. 5, xviii. 20). In these instances, as in the case of Michal's image, nothing is said to indicate the kind of homage

that was rendered them, but in some other parts of the Word they are spoken of as objects of superstitious reverence. Ezekiel says, "The king of Babylon stood at the parting of the way, at the head of the two ways, to use divination: he made his arrows bright, he consulted with teraphim, he looked in the liver" (xxi. 21); and Zechariah says, "The teraphim have spoken vanity, and diviners have seen a lie, and have told false dreams" (x. 2). In a corrupt state of the Jewish Church they are mentioned as forming part of the abominations which existed under the wicked reign of Manasseh—the workers with familiar spirits, and the wizards, and the teraphim, and the idols, which Josiah put away (2 Kings xxiii. 24). According to Swedenborg, "teraphim were idols, which were applied to or consulted when they inquired of God; and because the answers which they received were to them truths Divine, therefore truths are signified by them, as in Hosea, 'The children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without a teraphim' (iii. 4). An ephod and a teraphim denote truths Divine, which they received by answers, for when they inquired of God they put on an ephod." As the teraphim, when mentioned without reproach, were used chiefly by those in a simple state, as Laban and Micah were, it would appear that they represented apparent truths, such as are contained in the letter of the Word, which is Divine truth adapted to the apprehension of the simple, but which is liable to become perverted, as we find the use of the teraphim came to be, in a more advanced state of intelligence. Indeed, when our author uses the phrase "truth Divine," he means, as we have seen, apparent truth, as distinguished from real and absolute truth, which he calls Divine truth.

What, then, are we to understand by Michal putting the teraphim in the bed where David had been, and covering it with a cloth, and putting under its head a pillow of goats' hair? When Divine truth itself, which David represented, is providentially removed from the sight of those who seek to destroy it, apparent truth is made to take its place. And this is effected by the agency of the Church herself, which, in the inmost sense, Michal represented. When men can no longer receive the real truths of the Word, these are wisely and mercifully hid from their eyes, and its apparent truths are all that they are permitted to see, because these are all that they are able to receive. If men in their natural state were permitted to see spiritual truths, they would profane and destroy them, as Saul by his messengers sought to kill David; therefore the Lord hides those things from the wise and prudent, and reveals them unto babes. When the men of the Church are in evil, His permissive providence even allows them to fall into false persuasions; for it is less hurtful to believe a lie than it

is to hold the truth in unrighteousness. To represent this, Michal told the messengers whom Saul sent to kill David that he was sick ; and when Saul himself accused her of having deceived him, and sent away his enemy, she answered, "He said unto me, Let me go ; why should I kill thee?" It must not be understood that Michal's untruths were divinely ordered, or we might say inspired, so as that they might convey a spiritual idea. They were her own voluntary utterances ; but as written by the inspired penman, and woven into the sacred history, which Divine Wisdom made the continent of heavenly and Divine truths, they acquired a new and different character. It is also to be remarked that statements of this kind, which occur in many parts of the Old Testament, were not considered as violations of truth or of conscience in that age and under that dispensation. There is, besides, in all times, a wide distinction to be made between a malicious lie and a benevolent untruth—between a lie that is told to cause mischief, and one that is told to prevent it. It is contended, indeed, by some that no deviation from the truth is allowable under any circumstances ; but this is a position which the cause of truth does not require us absolutely to maintain. When all mischievous lying and interested deception, which is practical falsehood, are banished from the earth, Truth will utter no complaint and pronounce no condemnatory judgment.

To return from this digression ; there are some particulars respecting Michal's teraphim that require to be noticed.

When in the minds of men apparent truths take the place of genuine truths, those apparent truths of the Word, which are but the images of its genuine truths, and in themselves have no more life, find their way into the doctrine of the Church. This is representatively described by Michal laying the teraphim in the bed in the place of David ; for in the Word a bed is the symbol of doctrine. As the body reposes on a bed, so does the mind on its doctrine. David himself in the Psalms speaks of the wicked devising mischief on his bed (xxxvi. 4), which he does when he devises false principles of doctrine ; and he exhorts the righteous to commune with their own heart upon their bed, and be still (iv. 4), which they do when they examine their own heart by the standard of true doctrine, and still it by its teachings. Our Lord, sometimes, when He cured the sick, commanded them to take up their bed and walk ; which teaches us, though it might not be so understood by them, that the doctrine which has supported us in sickness should be lived up to in health, whether that sickness has been of the body or the mind. It is not what we feel and think in sickness, but what we will and do in health that determines our state. Therefore our Lord said that at His second coming, which is a coming to judgment, two should be in one bed, one of whom should be taken and the other left—

one saved and the other lost ; for those who are in doctrine without being in the life of doctrine are lost, while those who live according to doctrine are saved. And although at the end of the Church there may be no pure doctrine, if that which the Church teaches is sincerely believed and accompanied by a good life, it is sufficient for salvation. When the doctrine of the Church contains apparent instead of genuine truths, the teraphim are in the bed where David once had been ; and this is a necessity and a mercy, to prevent the destruction of genuine truth, and thus to save men from the condemnation which results from sinning against the light.

But Michal not only put an image in the bed, in the place of David, but she put a pillow of goats' hair under its head, and covered it with a cloth. In the Word goats, the hair of which is here to be understood, represent what has relation to faith, as sheep represent what has relation to charity. It is for this reason that the true members of the Church are called sheep, because they have charity as well as faith, while the false members of the Church are called goats, because they have faith without charity. The goat that contended with the ram, in the vision of Daniel (viii.), and the goats that are placed on the left hand of the Judge at the great judgment-day, are those who had made a profession of faith, but had not the charity which it requires—who had said, Lord, Lord, but did not the things which He says ; and the sheep that are placed on His right are those who had exercised the charity which is the end and life of faith. But goats have also a good meaning, since true faith includes charity, as true charity includes faith. Goats as well as sheep were accepted in sacrifice (Lev. i. 10), and goats' hair as well as rams' skins were employed in the furniture of the tabernacle (Exod. xxv. 4, 5). It is when faith comes to be regarded as the only justifying and saving grace that it ceases to be true faith. The pillow of goats' hair is under the head of the teraphim when faith, or salvation by faith, is held to be the principal tenet of Church doctrine. All religious errors, as drawn from the Scriptures, are derived from their apparent truths, and faith is that by which they are supported. But the image was covered with a cloth as well as supported by a pillow under its head. Cloth, when used as a garment for the body or a covering for a bed, is a symbol of the truth by which good is covered and protected. "The bed is shorter than that a man can stretch himself upon it, and the covering narrower than that he can wrap himself in it" (Isa. xxviii. 20). Thus does the prophet lament the state of religion, when the creed of the Church is so contracted as to prevent the full stretch of the powers of the mind, and its evidences are so narrow that they cannot satisfy its reasonable demands. In the strictly spiritual sense, length and breadth have reference to goodness and truth ; so that the bed is too

short and the covering too narrow when the doctrine of the Church neither satisfies the requirements of the will for goodness nor of the understanding for truth, but cramps the power of both. The cloth with which Michal covered her image is the confirming truth from the letter of the Word, which is employed to help to give to apparent truth the appearance of the real.

David, when he fled and escaped, came to Samuel to Ramah, and told him all that Saul had done to him. Samuel was David's spiritual father. He had anointed him to be king of Israel instead of Saul; and what so natural, in the extremity of his distress, as to come to one to whom he could tell all his sorrows, and who was so well able to give him counsel and encouragement? He might expect also, when even his own home afforded him no security, that the sanctity of the prophet's character would throw a shield of protection around him. But Saul had no respect for the sacredness of the sanctuary to which David had fled for safety. When it was told Saul that David was at Naioth, he sent messengers to take him. But the holy place was not to be invaded, nor its sacredness desecrated by tearing an innocent victim of persecution from the horns of the altar. But Saul's purpose was defeated in a way which the king could not have expected, nor even perhaps imagined, but one entirely consistent with the circumstances of the case. The messengers were not resisted as enemies, but were for the moment converted into friends. "When they saw the company of the prophets prophesying, and Samuel standing as appointed over them, the Spirit of God was upon the messengers of Saul, and they also prophesied." When it was told Saul, he sent other messengers; and when these prophesied likewise, he sent messengers the third time, who also became obedient to the same Divine influence. Saul, however, as if nothing either human or Divine should stand between him and the object of his wrath, now went himself "to Ramah, and came to a great well that is in Sechu: and he asked and said, Where are Samuel and David? And one said, Behold, they be at Naioth in Ramah." Sechu and Naioth are never mentioned except in this part of the Word; and nothing is known of them but the names, the meaning of which gives some idea of their symbolic character. Sechu, which means a watch-tower, has relation to truth; and Naioth, which means habitations, has relation to goodness. In such persecutions as this, the soul is more secure in the habitations of goodness than in the watch-tower of truth. The great well, also, to which Saul came, and where he inquired for Samuel and David, is peculiar to this place. There are two words in the Old Testament which generally appear in our Bibles as a well. One means a place where the water is supplied from within; the other a place where the water is collected from without; thus, one means a

well, the other a cistern or reservoir. The well to which Saul came, and where he inquired for the objects of his search, was of this kind. The truth that springs up in the mind itself has its receptacle in the understanding ; that which is collected from without has its receptacle in the memory. The truth which belongs to those whom Saul now represented, is of the memory only ; and however great or capacious that receptacle may be, and however filled with the knowledge of Divine and spiritual things, there may be no real love of truth and goodness, but, on the contrary, hatred of them and opposition to them ; and, indeed, the term great, which, in its genuine sense, is expressive of goodness, in its opposite sense is expressive of evil.

As directed, Saul goes to Naioth, but the fate of his messengers is also his. "The Spirit of God was upon him, and he went on, and prophesied, until he came to Naioth in Ramah. And he stripped off his clothes also, and prophesied before Samuel in like manner, and lay down naked all that day and all that night. Wherefore they say, Is Saul also among the prophets?" This singular effect upon Saul and his messengers, of coming within the holy sphere of the man of God, is not unlike that which some, with the same hostile intent, felt when they came within the holy sphere of the God-man. When the Pharisees and chief priests sent officers to take Jesus, and these messengers returned, and were asked, "Why have ye not brought Him?" they answered, "Never man spake like this man" (John vii. 45, 46). On the occasion, too, when the people themselves were divided in opinion respecting Jesus, some, who accused Him of having a devil and of being a false prophet, would have taken Him, but no man laid hands on Him, for His hour was not yet come (verses 30, 44). And on the night that Judas went with the officers of the chief priests to take Jesus, a more positive result was produced. When, on being asked if He was Jesus of Nazareth, the Lord answered, I am, they went backward and fell to the ground (John xviii. 6). Similar effects follow in the other world, when evil spirits, with even the deadliest feelings, come within the sphere of the angels ; they are paralyzed and often tormented by the contrariety of the sphere of heaven to that of hell. But there is another and still higher view of the subject than this.

There were two states which our Lord passed through in the world, states of humiliation and states of glorification, and these states alternated with each other. His states of humiliation were states of temptation ; His states of glorification were states of victory over the tempter. Every temptation which the Lord endured was followed by victory, for in every temptation He was more than conqueror. These temptations of our Lord, which, like those of men, consisted of three different kinds or distinct degrees of temptation, are described, representatively, by His three temptations in the wilderness, where He was

led up of the Spirit to be tempted of the devil. Three times Saul sent messengers to take David, and three times they were overcome, and turned into unwilling subjects and witnesses of the power that conquered them.

Jesus in His sore trials sought shelter from the persecution of His great enemy with the Divine in heaven among the angels, as David sought a refuge from the persecution of Saul with Samuel in Naioth among the company of the prophets. There he was safe ; for although the tempting power exalted itself to heaven, as Saul and his emissaries thrust themselves into the presence of Samuel and the company of the prophets, there their power ceased, and they themselves became the involuntary subjects of its influence. They were like Balaam, who went to curse and was compelled altogether to bless. Our author tells us that evil men and evil spirits can be elevated into the light of heaven, so as to be able to see truth like the angels themselves, and even to will in agreement with it ; but that they cannot long maintain that state, but relapse into their own natural condition. Saul seems to have been more completely in this state than his emissaries. "He stripped off his clothes, and lay down naked all that day and all that night." The clothing of the mind consists of its intellectual ideas, whether they be true or false ; and when these are stripped off, the mind appears in its nakedness ; and the natural selfhood, when stripped of its decent coverings, is seen to be also like Saul, in his nakedness, fallen and lying prostrate on the ground, earthly, sensual, devilish.

CHAPTER XIII.

DAVID'S FLIGHT AND JONATHAN'S AID.

I *Samuel* xx.

THE subject of this chapter is painfully interesting and deeply affecting. As a part of inspiration, given for correction and instruction in righteousness, it is not less edifying. But our limits will compel us to make our observations more general than we could wish. We have, besides, already treated of the friendship between David and Jonathan, of which we have here so beautiful a manifestation.

The history tells us nothing more of Saul on his visit to Samuel, but leaves him in his prophetic madness lying naked upon the ground. His presence and prophesying do not, however, seem to have reassured David, "who fled from Naioth in Ramah, and came and said before Jonathan, What have I done? what is mine iniquity? and

what is my sin before thy father, that he seeketh my life?" Such was now David's distress, and his despair of finding any way of escape from Saul's wrath, that he declared to Jonathan, "Truly as the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, there is but a step between me and death." David's bitterness of spirit was but a faint image of that of David's Lord, when He said, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death" (Matt. xxvi. 38). It is very expressive also of a state of mind which is produced by all severe spiritual trial. "Temptations are attended with devastations and desolations, and also with despairings, and with consequent feelings of grief and indignation." These trials and temptations, in which the evils of his nature are excited by the agency of evil spirits, give the Christian a view of the state of his own natural mind, as the seat of hereditary depravity and acquired evil, which is sufficient to produce all those feelings. It is through these evils that the temptations come; and temptation is permitted, that these evils, by being excited, may be seen, and being seen, may be condemned, and being condemned, may be removed. It is the inner man that sees and abhors them. For the state which is here represented is that described by the Apostle, in which the Christian delights in the law of God after the inward man, but sees another law in his members warring against the law of his mind, and bringing him into captivity to the law of sin which is in his members (Rom. vii. 22, 23). In regard to the Lord, He not only delighted in the law of God after the inward man; His inward man was the law itself; and the law in His members that warred against the law of His mind, was the natural mind which He, in common with His creatures, inherited from His human parent. It was in consequence of inheriting our common nature that He was in all points tempted as we are, but with this all-important difference, that in Him temptation was without sin. In the Lord evil tendencies never become evil acts; they had no active existence but as temptations. In those who are being regenerated evils are not only felt as desires, but come forth as sins. So true is it that no man liveth and sinneth not, and that in temptation no mere man comes up to the full measure of the stature of Christ, since, in all his doings and sufferings, if he does not actually sin, he comes short of the glory of God. David was able to say, "What have I done? what is mine iniquity? what is my sin before thy father?" Jesus was able to say, "Which of you convinceth Me of sin?" His sinlessness was different from David's, it was absolute and invariable. Yet David's innocence, under the present harassment and provocation, was a not unworthy shadow of the coming substance.

It would appear that while under the protection of Samuel, David, though harassed by Saul, was in no real danger of his life, since Saul and his messengers, when they came within the sphere of the prophet,

were for the moment changed into other men. It may therefore seem singular that David should leave his place of safety, and return with the intention of taking his usual place at Saul's table. "Behold," he says to Jonathan, "to-morrow is the new moon, and I should not fail to sit with the king at meat." Yet fearing a repetition of Saul's violence, David expressed a wish to remain in the field until the third day at even, and engaged Jonathan to excuse his absence to his father on the plea that he had earnestly asked leave to go to Bethlehem, his city, for there was a yearly sacrifice there for all the family. The new moon was the occasion of an appointed festival in the Israelitish Church (Num. x. 10), because it represented the beginning of a new state, especially a state of faith, which the moon symbolizes; and, therefore, over their sacrifices and burnt-offerings they were to blow the silver trumpets, made of a whole piece (ver. 2), to represent the unity of faith as the means of expressing the affection of charity. But this new moon was no time of rejoicing for David. The silver trumpet did not speak to him of faith and love, but of unfaithfulness and hatred. Evil had changed its peaceful and jubilant note into a sound of war and alarm. The new moon served the purpose, however, of David excusing himself for being absent from Saul's table on this festive occasion.

Saul missed David on the first day, but accounted to himself for his absence by supposing he was prevented from appearing by some legal uncleanness. When he did not appear the second day, Saul said to Jonathan, "Wherefore cometh not the son of Jesse to meat, neither yesterday, nor to-day?" Jonathan gave the concerted answer. Saul was not to be deceived by this pretence. His pent-up rage vented itself in a form most offensive to an Israelitish son, by making a reproachful allusion to his mother. He revealed at the same time the real cause of his determined attempts torrid himself of David. "For," he said, "as long as the son of Jesse liveth upon the ground, thou shalt not be established, nor thy kingdom. Wherefore now send and fetch him unto me, for he shall surely die." On Jonathan's advocating the cause of his friend, Saul cast at his son a javelin, which had no doubt been intended for the son of Jesse. "So Jonathan arose from the table in fierce anger, and did eat no meat the second day of the month."

As Saul's enmity to David represents the enmity of the natural man to the spiritual, and his assaults upon him represent the temptation-conflicts that arise from that enmity, we may learn from these particulars something relating to our Christian life and experience, and even to the life and experience of Him who is "the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider Him that endured such contradiction

of sinners against Himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds" (Heb. xii. 2, 3). We have the encouragement and warning of another witness, who tells us that "when man is in temptation his internal spiritual man is under the Lord's rule by means of angels, but his external or natural man is under the rule of infernal spirits; and the contest between them is perceived in man as temptation. Resistance arises from the natural man."

If David left a place of safety to return to the scene of danger, it was because it was the sphere of duty. Our Lord withdrew Himself from those who sought His life, but returned again to the scene of strife, because it was His sphere of usefulness. So the Christian flees from manifest danger and seeks refuge in the sanctuary of his God amid the angels of His presence, but comes forth again in obedience to the call of duty.

The first thing that David did when he returned was to ask through Jonathan what he had done to justify his father in seeking his life. In this and in what is further related in this chapter respecting Jonathan's kind office, in coming between David and Saul, we may see the exemplification of another truth relating to the Lord and to man.

Jonathan, seeking to cheer his friend and to assuage the wrath of his father, is true to his character as a medium, whose use it is to reconcile things that are discordant, especially the inward and the outward man, and of the twain to make one new man.

The principle of mediation enters, as we have had occasion to show, into the whole economy of religion, and indeed into the economy of the entire universe, natural and spiritual. As nothing can act through a vacuum, universal attraction requires a universal medium. This is supplied by the ethereal fluid which extends through all space, and "penetrates the earth and the water, preserving the terraqueous globe in its present harmony and impelling it in its rotations." The sun could not convey its light and heat to the earth without the medium of the atmosphere. The same law rules in the spiritual world. Things that are distinct are connected, things that are discordant are reconciled, through mediums. This prevails in all things from the lowest to the highest, until we come by the supremest of all, the Lord's Humanity, which is the reconciling and uniting medium between God and man. And not only so, but it was the Father's will "that in the dispensation of the fulness of times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth" (Eph. i. 10); and "to reconcile all things unto Himself, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven" (Col. i. 20). With respect to the present case, there are mediums for connecting and reconciling the internal and the external man. "The internal cannot have communication with the external without a medium. The interior or rational

man is intermediate between the internal and external, and enables the internal to flow into the external: without it, there could be no communication between them." In the work of regeneration, which is the reconciling of the internal and the external man, and of what is spiritual and what is natural in man, there are also mediums. "During the process of regeneration man is kept by the Lord in a kind of mediatory good, which serves for introducing genuine goods and truths. Every one who has any knowledge of regeneration and of the new man can comprehend that the new man is altogether different from the old, for he is in the affection of spiritual and celestial things, which constitute his delight and blessedness, whereas the old man is in the affection of worldly and earthly things, these constituting his delights and satisfactions. Thus the new man has respect to heavenly ends, but the old man to worldly ends. Hence it is manifest that the new man is altogether other and different from the old. In order that man may be led from the state of the old man into the state of the new, worldly lusts must be put off and heavenly affections must be put on. This is effected by innumerable means, which are known to the Lord alone, and of which some are known to the angels from the Lord, but few if any to men. Nevertheless all these are manifested in the internal sense of the Word. While, therefore, man from the old man is being made into the new, or while he is being regenerated, this is not effected in a moment, as some suppose, but by a process of several years, nay, of a man's whole life, even to the last period; for his lusts are to be extirpated, and heavenly affections are to be insinuated, and he is to be gifted with a life which he had not before, and of which he had scarcely any notion. Since, therefore, the states of his life are to be so much changed, he must be kept for a considerable time in a sort of middle good, that is, in a good which partakes both of the affections of the world and of heaven."

In Saul's attempt to slay Jonathan we have a figure of the resistance of the natural man to the influence of the spiritual, as operating through the medium of that real truth which is ever striving to remove the enmity of the natural against the spiritual, by removing the unworthy ends by which it is actuated, and the fallacies by which they are supported. But so long as natural ends prevail and seek to have the dominion, so long will the false principle, like the javelin of Saul, be ready to be cast at the truth in whatever form or through whatever channel it comes. Jonathan's fierce anger is but a mode of representatively expressing the entire disagreement existing between the natural and the spiritual, and the apparent and the real in man; as anger, when predicated of God, is expressive of the disagreement between the Divine and the human mind.

But Jonathan, when he went out in anger from the presence of Saul, came in love to the hiding-place of David. By agreement

between the two friends David hid himself till Jonathan should ascertain Saul's temper towards him. When Jonathan came to the place where David had concealed himself he shot three arrows ; and by a preconcerted direction to his attendant, David was made aware that his safety was in flight. Truths from the armoury of the Word of God, of which these winged messengers were the symbols, instruct the mind respecting the condition of things, and give either encouragement or warning as the circumstances admit or require.

But the shooting of the arrows. David was to come to the place where he hid himself when the business was in hand, and remain by the stone Ezel. "And I will," said Jonathan, "shoot three arrows on the side thereof, as though I shot at a mark. And, behold, I will send a lad, saying, Go, find out the arrows. If I expressly say unto the lad, Behold, the arrows are on this side of thee, take them ; then come thou : for there is peace to thee, and no hurt ; as the Lord liveth. But if I say thus unto the young man, Behold, the arrows are beyond thee ; go thy way : for the Lord hath sent thee away." This hiding to escape a threatened danger is that which is spoken of by David himself. "In the shadow of Thy wings will I make my refuge, until these calamities be overpast" (Ps. lvii. 1) ; and of which Isaiah speaks when he says, "Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee : hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast" (xxvi. 20). The Lord is our refuge in time of trouble ; but to make Him our refuge we must raise our thoughts and affections upward, or what is the same, turn them inward ; for unless the Lord dwells in the heaven within us, it will avail us little to look up to the heaven without us. The interiors of the mind are the inner chambers where the spiritual life may be preserved in safety until the indignation of the natural man be overpast. The Word also is a place of safety, because the Lord is present with us and in us by His Word. It is the stone Ezel, by which we must remain in our time of trouble. It is also, as it were, the touchstone by which our state and fate are determined. If Jonathan shot within the mark of the stone, it was to be a sign of safety ; if beyond, it was to be a sign of danger. Within is the spirit of the Word, beyond or without is the letter ; and the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life (2 Cor. iii. 6). The Word, also, like the stone Ezel, as its name imports, shows us the way ; and even if it be but the way of departure, it is at least the way out of danger and of escape from evil.

When Jonathan's attendant had gathered up the arrows and gone away into the town, "David arose out of a place toward the south, and fell on his face to the ground, and bowed himself three times : and they kissed one another, and wept with one another, until David exceeded." To rise toward the south is to rise into a state of spiritual light and intelligence ; to fall with the face to the earth and bow three

times is to be in a state of profound humiliation ; and to kiss one another is to be united in love ; while to weep over their common troubles and on account of their enforced outward separation, is expressive of grief at the discordance existing between the natural and the spiritual man, and at the consequent enforced separation of goodness and truth, the concord and union of which constitute heaven and happiness. This severance lies at the foundation of all grief ; it is this which opens the fountain of tears in all eyes. The fact that we weep from excess of joy as well as of sorrow does not invalidate this truth. The feeling that produces tears is connected with that of separation ; and the intense joy that wells up from the heart through the eyes is only the opening of a fountain that a settled sorrow may have long sealed up. Jesus wept ; and His tears expressed both grief and love, sorrow and joy. He wept over the doomed city of Jerusalem and at the grave of Lazarus. His tears at the grave of Lazarus must have been expressive of joy as well as of sympathizing sorrow ; for He knew, though the weeping sisters of Lazarus knew not, that He was about to raise him from the dead. And when we consider that the resurrection of Lazarus was a type of the Lord's raising up a Church among the Gentiles, we must regard this as a part of the joy that was set before Him.

To look at the subject in relation to ourselves. David himself exhorts us to kiss the Son lest He be angry, and we perish from the way (Ps. ii. 12)—to seek conjunction with the Lord by love. The Lord sympathizes with us in all our sufferings. He weeps over us while we are yet in our sins ; He weeps in us when we shed the tears of repentance ; and He weeps with us when we weep for joy. This feeling of sympathy between the Saviour and the saved arises from His being "touched with a feeling of our infirmities," because He "was in all points tempted like as we are" (Heb. iv. 15). But in all the Lord's weeping in us and with us, He, like David with Jonathan, will ever "exceed" in all the tenderest affections that can be excited in our hearts. It is from Him that our godly sorrow and our heavenly joy come ; and He who supplies all must exceed in all that He supplies. But the Lord gives us not only sympathy but aid : "For in that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted" (Heb. ii. 18).

Before these two tender friends parted, Jonathan reminded David of the covenant to which both of them had sworn in the name of the Lord, and which was between them and their seed for ever.

The Christian's covenant with the Lord extends to all states of love and faith which are successively begotten in the heart and understanding and born in the life, of which, in the regenerate, there is no end.

CHAPTER XIV.

DAVID, FLEEING FROM SAUL INTO PHILISTIA, RECEIVES FROM AHIMELECH THE PRIEST SHOWBREAD AND THE SWORD OF GOLIATH.

1 *Samuel* xxi.

To his inward trust in the Lord the Christian unites the outward means of resistance. David, while he trusted in the Lord, had the sword of Goliath, which, had occasion required, he would have turned against his enemies, those very enemies whom that sword had defended. He was now in the giant's own city, to whose king he had fled, to seek shelter from the wrath of Saul, the king of his native land, from which he had been driven by a cruel persecution.

The history of David, viewed as a history of Him whom he represented, even David's Lord, presents to the mind some idea of the persecutions and sufferings He endured, and of the glory into which He entered, when He had overcome and risen purified above them. The Christian disciple, to whom the Lord has said, and to whom He still says, "In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world," may see too in this history the path which leads to purity and bliss. That path is not indeed all darkness and suffering. If such were the case the spirit would fail, and the prize would be lost. In the spiritual as in the natural life there is, as a general rule, more of peacefulness and light than of tribulation and darkness. And there is always this additional consolation to the spiritually-minded man, that when he does suffer, he does not all suffer. As, when the tempest is raging below, lashing the sea into fury and agitating the forest with terrific violence, perfect tranquillity reigns in the upper heaven; and as, when dense clouds darken the earth and pour out their inundating floods upon it, the sun shines in all his majesty and glory above them—so when the earthly region of the regenerating mind is dark and tempestuous, there is sunshine and peace in the upper and inner region, which, though it may be concealed, can never be invaded, by the evils that disturb and the falsities that obscure the natural mind below. Even in these natural and grateful vicissitudes of state, which are provided to refresh the mind by the alternations of activity and repose, both intellectual and moral, the inner mind knows less of change both in extent and duration than that which is without; just as the mountain enjoys the sunshine long after the shadows of evening have fallen upon the vale below,

and receives it long before it gladdens the earth where are the ordinary dwellings of men. And the higher the mountain rises, the more it possesses of evenness of temperature and continuance of light.

Although, therefore, in this world we must have tribulation, and in both worlds change, yet the higher we rise in the life of heaven, the less does the tribulation inwardly disturb us, or the change inwardly affect us; the nearer we are to Him who is without variableness or shadow of turning, who is the same yesterday and for ever, the more we enter into the tranquillity of settled peace and the unclouded light of eternal sunshine.

Yet in the world of time, the labour of the upward task is still before us. All may have conquered, but none have as yet overcome the last enemy. Tribulation ends only with the present life; and that which continues through life, that from which the present existence is never exempt, and from which no moment of it is entirely secure, demands and deserves our attention, as the frequent occurrence of the subject in the language and symbolism of the Scriptures abundantly show.

The present part of the history, however, does not so much relate to the subject of tribulation itself as to the relief which the troubled soul finds on the way, when driven by the violence of inward persecution to seek refuge for a time in a state which is useful only when it is temporary, or in principles which are useful only when they are auxiliary.

We have instances of this kind in the Sacred Scriptures. One is in the case of Elijah the Tishbite. When in consequence of the sins of Ahab the heavens were shut up for three years and six months, and drought and famine were in the land, the prophet was commanded to go to the banks of the Jordan, where he drank of the brook Cherith and was fed by the ravens; and when the brook dried up, he was sent to a widow of Zarephath, who sustained him with bread made of the meal which he himself miraculously supplied. On another occasion, when he fled from the face of Jezebel, and, weary of his life, he laid himself down under a juniper-tree, and slept in the wilderness, he was awakened by an angel who said to him, "Arise and eat. And he looked, and, behold, there was a cake baken on the coals, and a cruse of water at his head." Besides these and other instances of the same character there is one still more striking and important. The Lord Jesus Himself, when an infant, to escape the rage of Herod, and be preserved in the massacre of the innocents, was by Divine command carried down into Egypt, where He remained till the danger was passed.

In the teaching of the Lord, the same mode of proceeding is recom-

mended to His disciples, "When they persecute you in one city, flee into another."

These things are written for our direction and comfort. They instruct us what we ought to do and how we are to be provided for, in states of trial or in times of danger.

The case of Elijah teaches us how the faithful are to act, and how they shall be succoured, when the heaven of the inner man is shut up and the gentle showers of spiritual truth no longer descend, and the streams of spiritual intelligence no longer flow; and the mind languishes under that most terrible calamity, a famine, not of bread and water, but of the hearing—the inward, peaceful, and obedient hearing of the Word of God.

For what is it that shuts up the windows of heaven, so that the blessing is not poured out upon us from on high, and our minds are turned into deserts? Is it not the evil of looking outward to the world for our blessings, instead of looking for them upward to heaven? to natural rather than to spiritual, to temporal rather than to eternal things? What is evil in its root but reliance upon self? and what is good in its root but trust in the Lord? "Trust in the Lord, and do good; and verily thou shalt be fed." And where does the Lord send us to learn this trust? "Consider the ravens: for they neither sow nor reap; which neither have storehouse nor barn; and God feedeth them: how much more are ye better than the fowls?" God not only feeds the ravens, but He sends the raven to feed the prophet, and instructs him to be our teacher.

It might seem that when man takes the double security of providing both for his present desires and for his future wants, he might have more perfect contentment than the birds of heaven, that take no thought for the morrow, and therefore do not gather into storehouse or barn. The raven feeds us when we learn from him to take no anxious or distrustful thought for the morrow, especially when, in a spiritual manner and in spiritual things, we lay not our treasures up in the earthly storehouse of the outward memory, and say to our souls, "Thou hast much goods laid up for many years, take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry;" but when, through the loving affections of the inner man, we daily receive from the Lord out of heaven the true bread, which is His flesh, and which He gives for the life of the soul that hungers after righteousness.

In those instances in which safety and sustenance were sought in times of hunger and scarcity, the place and the supply were generally inferior to those from which the sufferer was driven. Philistia and Egypt were not unfrequently the places of sojourn. Abraham and Isaac sojourned in the land of the Philistines, Jacob sojourned in Egypt, and the whole of his house went down there to be nourished by

Joseph, when the famine was sore in the land of Canaan; and there the infant Saviour was preserved. The reason of this is to be found in the representative character of these places, Philistia when friendly being the type of intelligence, and Egypt of knowledge; and the going down there represented initiation into knowledge and intelligence, as the means of improvement in the life of religion.

David, when he fled from the face of Saul, was on his way to Achish, king of Gath, the very city of the Philistines to which Goliath had belonged. He did not indeed remain long there, but passed into the land of Judah, where he found a place of security in the cave of Adullam.

It was on his way to Achish that he obtained from Ahimelech the priest bread out of the sanctuary and the sword of Goliath.

This circumstance derives additional interest from the reference which our Lord makes to it on the occasion of the Jews accusing His disciples of breaking the Sabbath, because on that day they had plucked the ears of corn and had eaten of them. "Have ye not read," said our Lord, "what David did, when he was an hungred, and they that were with him; how he entered into the house of God, and did eat the showbread, which was not lawful for him to eat, neither for them that were with him, but only for the priests?" The Lord further vindicated His disciples, and Himself as their Master, by declaring to the Pharisees that "the Son of man is Lord even of the Sabbath-day" (Matt. xii.). If Jesus, by allowing His disciples on that day to pluck and eat the ears of corn, showed that He was Lord of the Sabbath; David's act of eating the showbread was intended to represent that He was Lord also of the Temple; for in the highest sense David represented the Lord, and those that were with him represented His disciples. The Temple was the holiest place, the Sabbath was the holiest day; and both were types of Him as the Holy One. The Temple itself was not indeed built in David's time, but the Tabernacle then existed; and both were the house of God, and both had a holy signification, as had every place where the Lord was duly worshipped. But not only did the Temple and the Sabbath represent Him; the sacred bread of the Temple and the corn of the field pointed to him as the bread of eternal life. The Lord in His own person was Priest as well as King; and He promises to make His disciples priests and kings also. He is the Priest as the dispenser of love, and His disciples are priests as the recipients of His love; He is the King as the dispenser of truth, and His disciples are kings as the recipients of His truth.

When David and them that were with him did eat of the showbread, which was not lawful for him to eat, but for the priests only, he showed beforehand that Jesus should enter into the holy place, and introduce His disciples into the holy things of the Church, and give

them to eat of the holy principle of spiritual goodness, by which the soul is spiritually nourished. This holy good is especially precious in the state of the spiritual life which David's present condition represented. He was fleeing from the face of his enemy, and going to seek protection in another country than his own; and like the prophet Elijah, he was to go in the strength of that meat to the place of safety. The meat which is in such states received is that which is from God, and which nourishes the inward man during times of labour and trial. The Lord Himself was sustained by this food, and He indeed above all others. To this food He alluded when He said to His disciples, "I have meat to eat which ye know not of." That meat was the Divine Good, which He inwardly received from the Father, that dwelt within Him, and of which no man knew. This was truly the hallowed bread, which it was not lawful or possible for any but Himself to eat, and which none but Himself could receive in its Divine fulness, holiness, and power.

Those who were with David received of the hallowed bread as well as himself. The followers of the Lord receive indeed of the bread that is sanctified; but they receive it in a different measure and degree. It was to give His disciples this bread that He Himself received it: and it is through Him only that they can receive it also. Our Lord said, "No one knoweth the Father but the Son;" but He added these all-important words, "and he to whom the Son will reveal Him." This is the mystery of godliness—God manifest in the flesh—"No man hath seen the Father at any time; ye have neither heard the voice of the Father at any time nor seen His shape." Had not the Son brought Him forth to view, the Father would have remained for ever unseen, unheard, and unknown. How full of significance and of consolation and blessing are the Lord's words to Philip, "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father, and from henceforth ye have known Him and have seen Him!" The incomprehensible Divinity brought to our apprehension by the Humanity is the glory of the Incarnation. And the divinity is brought to us, so as to be with us in all our Christian experience, because that Humanity passed through all human experience. The Lord hungered and thirsted, not for the bread that perisheth nor for the water that fails, but for the hallowed bread that feeds the soul and for that living water that flows from Him as its eternal and infinite Fountain. And it is because He hungered and thirsted for, and ate and drank of this bread and water, that He now ministers to the spiritual wants of His children. He has in the proper sense a feeling of our infirmities. "Have ye not read how David did eat of the showbread, and them that were with him?"

How consolatory is it that this bread is given us in states of affliction. During the travail of the soul it is satisfied with the food of the

sanctuary ; it is inwardly sustained by the bread of life, when the ordinary means of support fail, and in the strength of that meat we go on during our forty days' journey.

But David inquired of Ahimelech if there were not under his hand spear or sword: The spiritual, like the natural life, requires defence as well as sustenance, and the means of its defence are signified by arms of war. The particular inquiry which this narrative suggests is the meaning of his receiving the sword of Goliath.

In treating on a former occasion of the single combat between David and Goliath, we spoke of the meaning of the sword of the giant, with which his youthful conqueror cut off his enemy's head. Armour, offensive and defensive, symbolizes the truths, in their pure or perverted state, by which principles are maintained and defended. The weapons that the evil employ against the good are not absolute falsities, for these have no power against them, but are truths falsely interpreted and applied ; and these have power against the good, so far as the good can be deceived by the fallacy that they are the true teaching of the Scriptures. The sword of Goliath represented the truths of the Word perverted, so as to give a seeming support to the false principle that salvation may be obtained by faith, whatever the life may be. When this sword was taken from Goliath, and made the instrument of his own destruction, it represented, in the hand of David, truth restored to its true author, and employed in destroying the evils which, in the hand of the giant, it had been the means of supporting. As laid up in the sanctuary, it represented the truth that is consecrated to the service of God. When this sword was given by Ahimelech the priest to David, who was now anointed as king, it represented truth from the Lord's divinity, received into His humanity, as the instrumental means of subduing the powers of darkness, and accomplishing the work of human redemption. In harmony with this meaning, considered in reference to the Christian, the sword thus given out of the sanctuary is truth derived from good, coming into the life, where it is in its fulness and its power. When told by Ahimelech that the only sword he had was that of Goliath, David said, "There is none like that, give it me." To this instrument of war he gave a preference above all others, teaching us that the truth which is delivered from the perversion of evil is capable of being more serviceable than any other, since it can be turned more effectually against the power of the enemy, which is self-love or the love of the world.

In the history before us, then, we are instructed that if in our spiritual straits and distresses we betake ourselves to the sanctuary, we shall receive that relief which our necessities require. The bread that sustains and the sword that defends are there laid up for those who are entitled and able to receive them. When we are driven by severe

internal trials into the land of the stranger, when we mourn our removal from those inward states of confidence and joy which bespeak the presence of the light and love of God in the mind, it is consolatory and hopeful to carry with us those spiritual gifts that will preserve our souls alive, and bring us again to our home in peace.

Let us pray and labour to be endued with patience and perseverance, and be led to a right and truthful use of the means which a bountiful Providence bestows upon us. Times of adversity are seasons of improvement. They prepare us, when rightly employed, for using with advantage seasons of prosperity. This is the end for which they are permitted. The Lord desires to bestow upon His suffering ones the blessings of His kingdom, peace and rest, by leading them through tribulation. Let them be of good courage and He will strengthen their heart.

But the land of the stranger to which David now fled was like to be as dangerous, and proved as inhospitable, as that of his own kindred and people from which he had been driven.

When David had obtained the showbread and the sword of Goliath, he "arose, and fled that day for fear of Saul, and went to Achish the king of Gath." Arrived there, his fears were awakened by the words of the servants of Achish, "Is not this the king of the land? did they not sing one to another of him in dances, saying, Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands?" Fearing Achish, he feigned himself mad, and scrabbled on the doors, and let his spittle fall upon his beard. So well did he act his part, that he became the object of the king's contempt and aversion, which enabled him to escape this new peril. The appearance of madness which David so successfully assumed, was like those appearances we read of in Scripture, which are produced by the mental states of those who see them. What David feigned to be, the apostle appeared to be. "We commend not ourselves again unto you, but give you occasion to glory on our behalf, that ye may have somewhat to answer them which glory in appearance, and not in heart. For whether we be beside ourselves, it is to God: or whether we be sober, it is for your cause" (2 Cor. v. 12, 13). "The preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God" (1 Cor. i. 18). "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (ii. 14). How did our Lord Himself appear to the spiritual Philistines, the uncircumcised in heart, of His day? They said, "He hath a devil, and is mad; why hear ye Him?" (John x. 20.) And what say natural men of the Scriptures of truth? Do they not consider them to be the scrabbling of the foolish or the designing? When Jesus stooped down and wrote upon the ground, as

a mark of His condemnation of the hypocritical accusers of the sinning woman ; when He spat upon the ground, and made clay of the spittle, to anoint the eyes of the blind, He gave the true sense and use of the truth, which, to the unbelieving, appears only as scrabbling upon the doors, and as spittle upon the beard. But there is another side of this subject, which will be considered when we come to treat of David's second visit to Achish and his favourable reception by him, when he finds a refuge from the enmity of Saul with Saul's last and conquering enemy. Meanwhile the anointed of the Lord, and the potential king of the land, is hunted like a partridge upon the mountains, with no covert in which to find shelter and repose.

It would appear from the superscription of the 56th Psalm, which was composed in reference to this part of David's experience, if not at the very time he was passing through it, that his danger was even greater than the narrative would lead us to suppose. The psalm is there said to relate to David, when the Philistines took him in Gath. If the expression does not mean that the Philistines actually seized David, it at least implies that they held him as securely as if he had been their personal captive. The psalm itself describes a state of persecution and distress. But as the captivity, peril, and distress of David on this occasion typified those of the Christian, and even those of the Lord Himself, in a corresponding state of trial, the words of the Psalmist may be taken up by every spiritual sufferer. In the "summary exposition" we are told that this psalm treats of the Lord's temptations, in which He put His trust in the Father ; therefore it treats of the Christian's temptations, in which he puts his trust in the Lord. The malace of the tempting spirits is described by the people gathering themselves together, hiding themselves, and marking his steps, when they wait for his soul. This gives us an idea of the combined, hidden, watchful enmity of the spirits of evil, when they wait for the soul, that they make it their prey. But the language of the Psalmist should be that of the Christian. Prayer for the Divine mercy gives confidence in the Divine protection. "Be merciful unto me, O God, for man would swallow me up. What time I am afraid I will trust in Thee. In God I will praise His word, in God have I put my trust ; I will not fear what flesh can do unto me." The efficacy of trustful prayer is exemplified in David's experience. "When I cry unto Thee then shall mine enemies turn back ; this I know ; for God is for me." This trust, when it is earnest and persistent, is sure to be turned into triumph. "Thy vows are upon me, O God, I will render praise unto Thee. For Thou hast delivered my soul from death ; Thou wilt deliver my feet from falling, that I may walk before God in the light of the living." It is singularly appropriate that so much should be said about his steps and his feet, and of these being delivered from falling.

The Philistines representing those who are in faith alone, a temptation of the kind which their assaults describe is one that marks the steps, to draw one away from the practice of the law of life. And therefore one who is tempted to yield to the seductive influence or the specious reasonings of faith without works, which is the doctrine of devils, who believe and tremble, will especially mingle with his thankfulness for the past deliverance of his soul from this death, the trust that the Lord will deliver his feet from falling, that he may walk before God in the light of the living.

CHAPTER XV.

DAVID IN THE CAVE OF ADULLAM ; SAUL'S SLAUGHTER OF THE PRIESTS.

1 *Samuel* xxii.

DRIVEN from the abodes of men, David now betakes himself, for shelter and concealment, to a wild and solitary cavern, which has become famous as the cave of Adullam. This was situated in the land of Judah, near a city of the same name ; so that David was now in the dwelling-place of his own tribe and family. Adullam must have been a capacious hold, when it could afford shelter for four hundred men. Adullam may be regarded as the cave, not of despair, but of desperation. If the instincts of animals have their analogies in the tempers of men, as no doubt they have, David, pursued to the death by his enemies, is now, like the hunted stag at bay, ready to turn upon his pursuers. His pursuers do not, however, immediately follow him to his wild retreat ; but from this time he begins to assume a defensive and an offensive attitude. On the other hand, his brethren and all his father's house went down to him. "And every one that was in distress, and every one that was in debt, and every one that was discontented, gathered themselves unto him ; and he became a captain over them." What reason his family had for joining David and sharing his fortunes, or misfortunes, we do not learn, but we may see the spiritual lesson which the circumstance contains. When, in the progress of the regenerate life, the spiritual principle has so far passed through the furnace of affliction as to have become purified, though not yet seven times, it acquires new lustre and power, and becomes therefore of greater value, and is more highly esteemed. When the spiritual affection acquires purity by abstinence from sensual indulgence, and strength by eating the bread of the sanctuary and arming itself with the sword of truth, it draws around it and subordinates to

it all the natural affections, which then become, like David's adherents, instruments of power. David's brethren and his father's house are the natural affections that bear the nearest relationship to the spiritual. The motley crowd of distressed, bankrupt, and discontented Israelites that flocked to him have rather a suspicious appearance. And yet they may have had but too good ground for their distress and poverty and discontent. Saul's temper and the self-inflicted harassment in which he lived, afford too much reason for the suspicion that his government was neither wise nor just, and that distress and poverty and discontent had naturally sprung up under it. It is not surprising, therefore, that some of these sufferers should have gone to David in the cave, the very name of which seems to promise the redress of their wrongs and grievances, for Adullam means the justice of the people. They had also in all probability become aware of his having been anointed king, and convinced that he would occupy the throne. They might thus look upon him as their real though not yet actual sovereign, and follow him accordingly. Spiritually understood, these disaffected ones that gathered themselves unto David, are the natural thoughts and affections that have become distressed, impoverished, and discontented under the rule of merely natural ends and in the pursuit of merely natural objects, and who desire to place themselves under the government of spiritual ends and engage in the pursuit of spiritual objects. These states and the change from the rule of the natural to that of the spiritual mind extends to the whole man ; for distress is a state of the will, poverty is a state of the understanding, and discontent is a state of the life. That David became a captain over those who gathered themselves unto him does not necessarily imply that he was not also regarded as their king ; for Saul was anointed "captain" over the Lord's inheritance. It implies, however, that they acknowledged him as their leader, and were willing to fight under his banner. The ultimate object of conflict is the conjunction of goodness and truth, and the consequent union of the natural and the spiritual in man. This state is not yet complete. David's followers are as yet only about four hundred men. They have not reached that number which is expressive of completeness and conjunction.

David's precarious condition induced him to seek a safer and better asylum for his parents than his gloomy and comfortless cave afforded them. He "went thence to Mizpeh of Moab : and he said unto the king of Moab, Let my father and mother, I pray thee, come forth, and be with you, till I know what God will do for me. And he brought them before the king of Moab : and they dwelt with him all the while that David was in the hold." We are not told what personal connection or intimacy existed between David and the king of Moab ; but there was a blood-relationship between them, which made David's

assignment of his father and mother to the king's care an appropriate and significant act. The Moabites and the Israelites were the descendants of the two brothers, Abraham and Lot, although the blood of the Moabites was vitiated by Moab being the fruit of an incestuous connection between Lot and his eldest daughter. Yet the two streams, after flowing apart for eight hundred years, again united in Obed, the father of Jesse, the father of David; for Obed was the son of Ruth, a Moabitess. Singularly, Boaz, the husband of Ruth and father of Obed, was a descendant of Judah by his daughter-in-law, Tamar. Both of these, with other impure streams, ultimately met in the Messiah, that in His veins might flow the blood of all men, even the most impure, so that in and by Him all its impurities might be purged out, and humanity made perfect, and the origin and pattern of all human perfection. Moab, we have seen, (p. 37), represented those who are principled in natural goodness; and the truth of this good, when favourably disposed, may afford succour and protection to interior goodness and truth, as the king of Moab did to the father and mother of David all the time he was in the hold. This is the last we hear of the father and mother of David. According to Jewish tradition, the king of Moab destroyed them, but the Scriptures are silent, and there is nothing to indicate that such was their fate.

A vengeful act of Saul, strongly contrasting with the hospitable conduct of the king of Moab, is recorded in the subsequent part of this chapter. The prophet Gad had told David not to abide in the hold, but to get him into the land of Judah. David did not pass at once from the obscurity and confinement of the cave into the light and freedom of the open country, but came into the forest of Hareth; he passed from a more to a less obscure state, one in which there was more of life and therefore of hope.

Saul, who had lost sight of David, now heard that he was discovered. Sitting under a great tree in Gibeah, he upbraided his servants, who stood around, with conspiring against him, none of them showing him that his son had made a league with the son of Jesse, who stirred up his servant against him, to lie in wait as at that day. Then Doeg the Edomite, who, as recorded in chapter xxi., was present when Ahimelech the priest gave David the hallowed bread and the sword of Goliath, related this to Saul. The king sent for Ahimelech, and not only for him, but for all his father's house, and for the priests that were in Nob: and they came all of them to the king. In answer to Saul, who accused him of conspiracy, the priest urged the claim of David to his aid, as the most faithful of the king's servants, his son-in-law, ready to go at his bidding, and honourable in his house; he pleaded also his own ignorance of the real circumstances under which his aid was required. Saul did not want reasons, and was in no mood to listen to

the claims of justice. He thirsted for vengeance. He called to his footmen that stood about him to turn and slay the priests of the Lord ; and when they refused, he ordered Doeg, who "fell upon the priests, and slew on that day fourscore and five persons that did wear a linen ephod. And Nob, the city of the priests, smote he with the edge of the sword, both men and women, children and sucklings, and oxen, and asses, and sheep, with the edge of the sword."

This terrible and indiscriminate slaughter, so much like some others recorded in the Bible, affords painful evidence of the merciless spirit of the times as well as of the cruel temper of Saul. Yet there is this mysterious circumstance connected with it, that the destruction of the priests was the carrying out of a sentence that had been pronounced upon the house of Eli, that the Lord would cut off his arm, and the arm of his father's house, that there should not be an old man in his house, but all the increase of his house should die in the flower of their age (1 Sam. ii. 31-33). Our remarks on the Divine judgment upon the Amalekites, which Saul was sent to execute, will apply to the present case. When there are evils in a family or a race that cannot be eradicated, it is of the Divine Providence, because it is in the very nature of things, that they should become extinct. The only difference between the cases recorded in the Bible and those we find in history is, that the Bible shows us the hand of God, and history leaves us to discover it ; the Bible reveals the connection between the cause and the effect, and history leaves us to trace it. Some of the causes assigned in Scripture for the destruction of families and nations will appear to the mere historian as inadequate and even arbitrary, having not so much a moral as a religious ground. There is a sufficient reason for this. All moral conditions have their roots in spiritual states ; for the spiritual in man forms the inmost and enduring part of his nature : this is eternal, all other is temporary. His spiritual state and his resulting eternal condition are, therefore, the principal, and indeed the only, objects of the Divine care. In the case of Eli, religious laxity resulted in great moral corruption. His sons made themselves vile and he restrained them not.

But is there any connection between the death of these persons and Saul's ostensible reason for slaying them ?

If we take the merely literal sense of the history of this transaction, it presents a humiliating view of human nature. David obtained aid from the high priest, by representing himself as engaged in Saul's business. Saul slew the priest for succouring David, although the priest, in succouring David, thought he was serving Saul. The priest seems the only innocent one of the three, and yet the only sufferer. There is no doubt a moral lesson to be derived from this. It shows the terrible result of deceit on the one hand and of unscrupulous

selfishness on the other. But the facts must teach some lesson still higher than this, though not inconsistent with it.

A key to the spiritual meaning of the circumstances we are now considering seems to be supplied by the 52nd Psalm, which David wrote "when Doeg the Edomite came and told Saul, and said unto him, David is come to the house of Ahimelech." There is a different opinion as to whether the psalm itself refers to Doeg or to Saul. It is true that the simple narrative does not furnish just ground for concluding that Doeg was inspired by hatred of David and used deceit and lying to cause him mischief; but there may have been particulars known but not recorded which would justify David in ascribing these faults to him; and we know that when all the other attendants of the king shrank from perpetrating so sacrilegious a crime as slaying the priests of the Lord, even at the king's bidding, Doeg at once obeyed Saul's command, and performed the dreadful act, and afterwards carried the carnage into the city of the priests itself, leaving nothing that breathed. It appears to me, therefore, that the psalm refers to Doeg, and that he is considered as the real author of the mischief.

Now Doeg was an Edomite. Edom is mentioned in Scripture both in a good and in a bad sense, a circumstance that applies to many other persons and to most things in the Word, because in the Church, what is good and true, in the course of time, by various adulterations, degenerates into what is evil and false. In a good sense Edom signifies the good of the natural mind, to which the doctrinals of truth are adjoined; the opposite of which is self-love, to which false principles are adjoined. We cannot doubt that Doeg the Edomite here sustains this representative character. The chief of Saul's herdsmen, he was a wolf in sheep's clothing, and readily turned against and greedily devoured the shepherds of the Lord's flock. True he did this at Saul's bidding, but it was he who supplied Saul with an excuse for his conduct. Whether intentionally or not, he was the means of embittering Saul's hatred of David and inflaming him with wrath against the whole priesthood. Doeg therefore is the evil of self-love which, by falsity, stirs up and increases the inherent enmity of the natural against the spiritual, and induces it to seek the destruction of internal good by which internal truth has been strengthened. For although the slaughter of the priests may have been a judgment upon the house of Eli, yet the priestly function itself is holy, even although the persons who exercise it may be tainted with impurity, and Saul's crime was no less, although in committing it he unknowingly performed an act of retribution.

But the priesthood, though visited with this exterminating slaughter, was not entirely destroyed. One of the sons of Ahimelech, named

Abiathar, escaped, and fled after David. This is one of several instances recorded in the Word, of the attempt to make a complete destruction being defeated by the escape of one. When Abimelech slew his brethren, the sons of Jerubbaal, being seventy persons, upon one stone, Jotham the youngest was left, for he hid himself (Judges ix. 5). When Athaliah, the mother of Ahaziah, saw that her son was dead, she arose and destroyed all the seed royal. But Jehosheba, the daughter of king Joram, sister of Ahaziah, took Joash the son of Ahaziah, and stole him from among the king's sons which were slain, and hid him in the bed-chamber of Athaliah, so that he was not slain (2 Kings xi. 1, 2). These, with the present instance, were but types of the far more momentous escape of the child Jesus from the slaughter of the innocents. When man desires to make a complete end, God preserves a seed alive. "Except the Lord of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, and we should have been like unto Gomorrah" (Isa. i. 9). True indeed is this in the case of the infant Saviour; but it is true also of the Church in the world and in the human mind. Whatever destruction of the principles of life—spiritual and eternal—may be effected by the will of man, the Lord in His mercy preserves a remnant, otherwise salvation would be impossible. When man destroys these principles in his natural mind, the Lord preserves a remnant in his spiritual mind, drawing it inwards, where it may be in safety from the power of the destroyer. So David said to Abiathar, "Abide with me, fear not: for he that seeketh my life seeketh thy life: but with me thou shalt be in safeguard." David regarded himself as having occasioned the death of all these persons. The spiritual occasions the deadly activities of the natural, in the same sense that the Spirit is said to have occasioned the sufferings of Jesus, when He was led up of the Spirit to be tempted of the devil (Matt. iv. 11). The occasion is with the spiritual, the cause is in the natural. The spirit leads up, and the flesh draws down; hence the conflict. The victory, as in the Lord's death, may seem to be on Satan's side, but the resurrection proves the triumph to be on the part of the sufferer. So says the Psalmist in reference to the present case: "Thou lovest all devouring words, O thou deceitful tongue. God shall likewise destroy thee for ever, He shall take thee away, and pluck thee out of thy dwelling-place, and root thee out of the land of the living. But I am like a green olive-tree in the house of God: I trust in the mercy of God for ever and ever. I will praise Thee for ever, because Thou hast done it; and I will wait on Thy name; for it is good before Thy saints" (Ps. lii.).

CHAPTER XVI.

DAVID RELIEVES KEILAH ; IS PURSUED BY SAUL ; HAS HIS LAST
INTERVIEW WITH JONATHAN.

1 *Samuel* xxiii.

I HAVE remarked that the cave of Adullam seems to have been David's extremity ; since his life henceforward is no longer one of mere endurance, but of occasional vigorous and brilliant activity, even with regard to Saul himself.

Soon after Saul's slaughter of the priests, in revenge for Ahimelech having succoured David in his flight, "they told David, saying, Behold, the Philistines fight against Keilah, and they rob the threshing-floors." Keilah, we learn from Joshua (xv. 44), was one of the towns that fell to the lot of Judah, and is supposed to have been not far from the cave of Adullam. It may be considered natural, therefore, that the news of this attack should reach David before it could be conveyed to Saul ; and as the Philistines were evidently gaining the advantage, since they were carrying off the produce of the harvest, there was no time to lose in coming to the rescue. Another reason for this implied appeal to David for his assistance would be, that the men of Keilah were also men of Judah, and had, therefore, a nearer claim upon him for sympathy and aid than if they had belonged to any other tribe than his own. But there are other and higher reasons for David taking up the cause of the inhabitants of Keilah. Saul's operations against the enemies of Israel have been carried on in places other than the land of Judah. There was thus a spiritual reason why those who belonged to the highest of the tribes should be delivered by him who had been chosen from that tribe to occupy the highest place in the kingdom, and who even now represented a higher principle and power than the reigning king. The affections and thoughts of the inner man can only be delivered from the assaults of the enemy, whether that enemy be evil or falsity, by the power of internal goodness or truth. We cannot see our inward spiritual thoughts and affections but by inward spiritual light, nor can we, without that light, see the opposite principles that oppose them, and that would bring them into captivity, and rob them of the fruit of their labour and the means of life. The spiritual can also see into the natural and act upon it, but the natural cannot see into the spiritual, and cannot therefore bring the aid which its state and necessities may require.

When David learned the condition to which the men of Keilah were

reduced, he was but little able, with the force at his command, to render them effectual assistance. However much he may have been disposed to go to their help, he may well have been doubtful of the issue. But he knew there was a higher Power, and to Him he left the decision. "David inquired of the Lord, saying, Shall I go and smite these Philistines? And the Lord said unto David, Go and smite the Philistines, and save Keilah." With this Divine commission there would seem to have been no cause for hesitation. But "David's men said unto him, Behold, we be afraid here in Judah : how much more then if we come to Keilah against the armies of the Philistines? Then David inquired of the Lord yet again. And the Lord answered him and said, Arise, go down to Keilah ; for I will deliver the Philistines into thine hand." This fear of the Philistines by David's men is but a type of our feelings under corresponding circumstances ; and is that state expressed by the Lord, where He says, "The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak" (Matt. xxvi. 41). Our lower affections, influenced by natural considerations, often refuse to follow where our higher affection would lead, even when fortified with the direct teaching of the Divine Word. When this is the case we need not yield, and abandon the object we have in view ; we have only to look to the Lord for encouragement. When David inquired of the Lord the second time, and received the command to "arise and go down to Keilah," with the assurance that the Lord would deliver the Philistines into his hand, his men no longer refused to follow him. It is a Divine promise that importunity will succeed where asking fails. There is a virtue in repetition. It strengthens the purpose, and brings resisting thoughts and feelings into submission to it and co-operation with it. There is a power in that which is done twice. When interpreting Pharaoh's dream, Joseph said, "For that the dream was doubled unto Pharaoh twice ; it is because the thing is established by God, and God will shortly bring it to pass." And David himself says, "God hath spoken once ; twice have I heard this ; that power belongeth unto God" (Ps. lxii. 11). Truth must be confirmed, not only in the inner man, but in the outer man also ; and this we see plainly enough in the result of David's inquiries of the Lord : the first confirmed himself, the second confirmed his people. The second command to "arise" is one which, in respect to the natural man, is needed in the circumstances ; the elevation of the mind above natural considerations being necessary to remove fear and inspire courage.

The result justified the confidence which David and his men placed in the Divine assurance of victory over the dreaded hosts of the Philistines. They went down "to Keilah, and fought with the Philistines, and brought away their cattle, and smote them with a great slaughter. So David saved the inhabitants of Keilah." Keilah, as its name

imports, was a fortified town, and a strong force was required to subdue it. Yet David with his six hundred men overcame the host of the Philistines, to teach us how great things can be effected with small means, when the heart is right towards God. The victors were also enriched with the spoil of their enemies, which teaches us further, that when evil is overcome the mind is enriched with good. The salvation of the inhabitants of Keilah was the end for the accomplishment of which this enterprise of David was entered on, and this, so far as David was concerned, was complete. As regarded the inhabitants themselves, the result was far from being satisfactory. They had obtained deliverance, but had not learned gratitude. We shall see as we proceed how ill they rewarded David for the services he had rendered them.

We are now told that when Abiathar the son of Ahimelech fled to David to Keilah, he came with an ephod in his hand. At the conclusion of the previous chapter we read of this priest, the only one of his house that escaped Doeg's sword, coming to David, who received him, and promised him protection ; but he is no doubt introduced here to instruct us representatively that spiritual conquest, and deliverance from that falsity which places all reliance for salvation on faith alone, brings to us the principle of love and goodness, of which the priest is representative. But Abiathar comes with an ephod in his hand. And as this is a principal point in the narrative, and also in its spiritual meaning, we may here consider what the ephod signifies.

The ephod was the outermost of the priestly garments, over which was the breastplate, containing the twelve precious stones answering to the twelve tribes of Israel. The priest representing good, his garments represented truths by which good is clothed, or with which it clothes itself. The ephod being the outermost of the priest's official garments, represented outermost truths, in which interior truths terminate, and in which they are contained. On this account the ephod was more holy than the other garments. "What is most external is holier than what is internal, because, containing all interior things in their order, it keeps them together in form and connection, insomuch that if the external were removed, internal things would be dissipated. This may be exemplified in willing, thinking, and doing. To will is the first, to think is the second, and to do is the last. So far as what a person does contains what he thinks and what he wills, so far these interior things are kept together in form and connection." It is from this fact that so much is said in Scripture of men being judged according to their works ; which has been a stumbling-block to those who believe in salvation by faith without works ; and which has driven them to the strange expedient of attempting to reconcile two seemingly opposite statements of the Bible, by saying, that men are justified by their faith and judged by their works. The truth is, that

when a man is judged according to his works, he is judged according to his will and thought, of which his works are but the embodied form.

Such being the spiritual meaning of an ephod, it was appropriate that the priest should come to David, after the defeat of the Philistines, with an ephod in his hand, containing in its symbolism the idea of good works, as expressing the character of him who had overcome those who represented faith without works, who had robbed the threshing-floors of those who had gathered in the fruit of their labour — of their own good works.

But David does not long enjoy the peaceful fruits of the victory he has won. Saul hears of his exploit, and boasts that God has now delivered him into his hand, for he is shut in, by entering into a town with gates and bars. He therefore calls all the people together to war, to go down to Keilah, to besiege David and his men. David, knowing that Saul secretly practised mischief against him, and hearing of Saul's intention to come to Keilah, and storm the city for his sake, tells Abiathar the priest to bring hither the ephod. He inquires of the Lord if Saul will come down, and if the men of Keilah will deliver him up; and the Lord answers him, "He will come down;" and "They will deliver thee up." It is not surprising that Saul should pursue David, but that those whom David had saved from so formidable an enemy should deliver him into Saul's hand, may well excite our astonishment. And yet, what Omniscience declared they would do is not inconsistent with what we know of frail human nature. The first law of nature is said to be self-preservation; and under the influence of this law our greatest benefactors may be immolated, and offered on the altar of our own self-devotion. In delivering up David to the power of Saul, the men of Keilah would not have shown more selfish fear or base ingratitude than the disciples of the Lord actually displayed when, on His being seized by the emissaries of the chief priests, they all forsook Him and fled; and, not to speak of the one who betrayed Him, when he who had sworn to die with Him rather than deny Him, thrice deliberately declared that he knew Him not. The integrity of the men of Keilah was not put to the test; so that we cannot say whether their sin, had they committed it, would, like Peter's, have led to a state of deep repentance and profound humiliation. This, at least, we may learn from what they would have done, had they been tried, that there are frailties in our fallen nature and inclinations in our corrupt hearts that a wise and merciful Providence keeps from temptation, in which Omniscience sees we would fall. Although we cannot, even consistently with our own welfare, be preserved from all trials and temptations, there are many that we escape through the mercy of God, any one of which His wisdom foresees would prove our ruin.

When the Divine answers came to David's prayers, he and his men arose and departed out of Keilah, and went whithersoever they could go. And it was told Saul that David was escaped from Keilah ; and he forbore to go forth. Thus the Divine interposition saved not only the men of Keilah but Saul himself from committing a great crime. David also was preserved, though now again a fugitive, knowing not, seemingly, where to go. Going whithersoever they could, David and his men make their way to the wilderness. While David abode in the wilderness in strongholds, and remained in a mountain in the wilderness of Ziph, Saul sought him every day, but God delivered him not into his hand. It was when Saul was hunting David like a partridge upon the mountains, that Jonathan went to David into the wood, and strengthened his hands in God. Unwavering in his friendship, the son of Saul comes to comfort the son of Jesse in his affliction. He does not try to soothe and cheer him with words of human sympathy and hope, but seeks to strengthen him by expressing his own deep conviction of David's safety from harm and his high destiny. "Fear not : for the hand of Saul my father shall not find thee ; and thou shalt be king over Israel, and I shall be next unto thee ; and that also Saul my father knoweth." Although Jonathan has been hitherto convinced that David would be king of Israel, he has never till now so plainly expressed it, nor has he till now spoken of himself as occupying the second place in the kingdom. There may seem to be in this some surviving ambition in the mind of Jonathan. But it may be assumed that this was part of the covenant which had previously been or which was now made between the two friends. However this may have been, Jonathan utters a spiritual truth, since that principle which he represented is next in the Lord's kingdom to that which was represented by David. The genuine truths of the letter of the Word are next to the pure truths of the spirit of the Word ; and all things acquired by them hold the same relative place in the minds of those who are true members of the Lord's Church and true subjects of His kingdom. This was the last meeting of David and Jonathan. It does not appear from the description to have been so tender as that which took place between them when Saul had attempted the life of both ; but the covenant which they now made before the Lord was the solemn and final ratification of the intimate and indissoluble union which had grown up between them, and a sign of that which their union represented. David abode in the wood, and Jonathan went to his house ; David still dwelling under the shadow of the calamity which daily threatened him ; Jonathan retiring into the quietness of domestic life. Yet one is to emerge from the dark shadow into light and prosperity ; of the other we hear no more till we learn of him perishing, but in the cause of his country and of his father's house, on

mount Gilboa. Such are the ways of Providence in the affairs of our spiritual life, as reflected in the events and issues of our temporal life, as faithfully represented in the inspired record by the experience of its representative men.

But David is not allowed to remain long in the obscurity of the retreat he had found in the wood in the wilderness of Ziph. The Ziphites came to Saul to Gibeah, saying, "Doth not David hide himself with us in strong holds in the wood, in the hill of Hachilah, which is on the south of Jeshimon?" The city of Ziph, from which the wilderness had its name, was one of ten cities in the mountains that fell to the lot of Judah. The Ziphites were still more ill-disposed to David than the men of Keilah; they were not only ready but anxious to betray him into the hand of Saul. They said, "Now therefore, O king, come down according to all the desire of thy soul to come down; and our part shall be to deliver him into the king's hand." Saul blessed the Ziphites for having compassion on him, and desired that they should ascertain with certainty where David's haunts were, and return to him, when he would go with them, and, if David were in the land, he would search him out throughout all the ten thousands of Judah. The men went before Saul to Ziph, but David and his men were in the wilderness of Maon. Saul and his men went to seek him; and when they told David, he went down into a rock, and abode in the wilderness of Maon. The strongholds in which David hid himself were the caves of the mountain, in which he sought shelter and concealment; and Hachilah was indeed to him, as its name implies, a dark mountain, where his feet were liable to stumble; and while he looked for light, he was in danger of having it turned into the shadow of death (Jer. xiii. 16). Fleeing from desert to desert, from one state of temptation and desolation to another, in order to escape the vigilance of one enemy and the vengeance of another, David must have been in a state of deep distress. He has indeed left a record of his state of mind on this occasion. The 54th Psalm, as the title informs us, was composed during, or in reference to, this time of adversity. It is "a Psalm of David, when the Ziphites came and said to Saul, Doth not David hide himself with us?" In the agony of his soul David cries, "Save me, O God, by Thy name, and judge me by Thy strength. Hear my prayer, O God; give ear to the words of my mouth. For strangers are risen up against me, and oppressors seek after my soul: they have not set God before them. Behold, God is mine helper: the Lord is with them that uphold my soul. He shall reward evil unto mine enemies: cut them off in Thy truth. I will freely sacrifice unto Thee: I will praise Thy name, O Lord; for it is good. For He hath delivered me out of all trouble: and mine eye hath seen His desire upon mine enemies." In its inmost sense this psalm is a prayer

addressed by the Lord to the Father, that He would aid Him against those who desired to destroy Him. And if the psalm relates to the Lord, so must the history. David's afflictions are therefore typical of the afflictions of Him whom David represented. In its secondary sense it is, of course, like the history itself, descriptive of Christian persecution, and its happy result. "Blessed are they that are persecuted for righteousness' sake ; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." This is inward spiritual persecution, which removes our evil, draws out and confirms our goodness, and gives us a deep sense of the Divine mercy in delivering us out of all our trouble. Our trouble may be severe, our persecutors may be strong and many, but if we trust in the Lord, He will deliver us, however hopeless our case may seem to be. When David fled to the wilderness of Maon, expecting perhaps to find there, as its name expresses, a habitation or refuge, where he would be in safety from the persecution of Saul, he found himself in such perilous circumstances, that, but for an unexpected event that drew away his pursuer, he must apparently have been destroyed. "Saul pursued David in the wilderness of Maon. And Saul went on this side of the mountain, and David and his men on that side of the mountain : and David made haste to get away for fear of Saul ; for Saul and his men compassed David and his men round about to take them." In these perilous circumstances, "there came a messenger unto Saul, saying, Haste thee, and come ; for the Philistines have invaded the land. Wherefore Saul returned from pursuing after David, and went against the Philistines." In the providence of God one evil is sometimes permitted for the purpose of counteracting another, or of mitigating its effects. One evil cannot indeed remove another—Satan cannot cast out Satan—but it may draw the mind away, and direct it into another channel, so that it may pursue, for the time at least, another and higher or less unworthy object. Thus, the love of the world may draw men away from or moderate the love of self ; and the cultivation of refined tastes may draw them away from indulging the grosser appetites and passions ; nay, the love of reputation may draw men from vice to virtue. But, however much these may alter the course and conduct of life, they do not essentially change the character : this can only be effected by a change of principles. Saul did not cease to hate David because he turned from him in pursuit of another enemy. But Saul's choice of this new alternative, if it did not change Saul's disposition, altered David's condition. Wherefore he called the rock Sela-hammahlekoth, that is, the rock of divisions. The rock, or rocky fastness, in which David found shelter was the emblem of the Rock of Ages, the Divine truth, which is the Christian's security in times of persecution ; and it becomes a rock of divisions when the trial or temptation is ended,

and a division and separation are effected between the evil and the good. When relieved of Saul's presence, David went up from thence, and dwelt in strongholds in Engedi. But this and David's experience there form the subject of the next chapter.

CHAPTER XVII.

DAVID SPARES SAUL AND CUTS OFF THE SKIRT OF HIS ROBE.

1 *Samuel* xxiv.

HITHERTO we have seen David only as a fugitive fleeing before Saul, and we can have no doubt what his fate would have been, had he fallen into the hands of his merciless pursuer. We are now to see some of the circumstances connected with them reversed. David is still a fugitive, fleeing and hiding from his adversary, but Saul is providentially brought completely within David's power; and we shall see how differently he acts towards the king from the manner in which the king, if the case had been reversed, would have acted towards him.

No sooner had Saul left following the Philistines than he returned to renew with undiminished ardour his pursuit of David. Learning that the object of his search was now in the wilderness of Engedi, "he took three thousand chosen men out of all Israel, and went to seek David and his men upon the rocks of the wild goats. And he came to the sheepcotes by the way where was a cave; and Saul went in to cover his feet: and David and his men remained in the sides of the cave." David's men urged him to kill his enemy, whom God had delivered into his hand; but David only cut off the skirt of Saul's robe, and his heart smote him for doing even that, which seemed to him an impious deed. When Saul went out of the cave David followed him, and cried after him. Saul looked back; and David, addressing him, said, "Behold, this day thine eyes have seen how that the Lord had delivered thee to day into mine hand in the cave: and some bade me kill thee: but mine eye spared thee; and I said, I will not put forth mine hand against my lord; for he is the Lord's anointed. Moreover, my father, see, yea, see the skirt of thy robe in my hand: for in that I cut off the skirt of thy robe, and killed thee not, know thou and see that there is neither evil nor transgression in mine hand; and I have not sinned against thee; yet thou huntest my soul to take it." Saul would have been worse than wicked if he had not been melted and disarmed by this practical appeal to the better instincts of his nature. He made the fullest acknowledgment of David being

more righteous than himself. Recognising the fact, which he had so laboured to prevent, that David would surely be king, and that the kingdom of Israel would be established in his hand, he only asks David to swear unto him by the Lord that he will not cut off Saul's seed after him, nor destroy his name out of his father's house.

In the conduct of David towards Saul there is something so noble and generous, that it cannot fail to command our admiration. His sentiments are not, however, those of the natural disposition merely. They are inspired by piety to God, and are extended to Saul, not as a frail and erring human being, but as the anointed of the Lord.

There is a wide difference between the manifested character of many men when they act under the immediate influence of religious feeling, and when they act from the promptings of their own frail nature. Few men, perhaps, have exhibited more strikingly these two opposite characters than David, in whose history we find strongly marked instances of generosity and vindictiveness, mercy and cruelty, chastity and impurity.

No man is entirely exempt, in the sight of God and His angels, from the same charge, because no man is entirely free from the infirmities of sinful flesh.

There is, however, a wide difference, both in nature and degree, between the truly spiritual and the merely pious man.

Piety, as distinguished from spirituality, is a feeling of reverence for what is pure and holy, as distinguished from a state of actual purity and holiness. Those who are pious without being spiritual—who have reverence without holiness—are for the most part very susceptible of tender emotions; but these being excited from without, are impressions rather than states, and may last only so long as the outward producing cause is present. Acting from feelings excited by external circumstances, rather than inspired and regulated by inward principles, such persons are capable of emotions and actions widely different and even opposite in their character. Their corrupt nature, not having been subdued by religious self-denial, is likely to come forth in all its malignity when a sufficiently powerful appeal is made to the passions.

Whenever the life of man is marked by strikingly opposite or even widely different characteristics, there is reason to fear that spirituality has been too little cultivated, however piety may have been cherished. Those who are spiritually minded are not, indeed, exempt from all the feelings and actions that originate in human infirmity. They will, however, be so in the degree that the spiritual in them has obtained the dominion over the natural. Those who are born again receive a new nature; and it is impossible for any who have thus become new creatures, deliberately to commit deeds that are characteristic of the old man, of the world and the flesh.

Yet David committed such deeds; and David is said to have been a man after God's own heart. It is against the conclusion sometimes drawn from the combined testimony of these two facts that we require to be guarded. That conclusion is, that evil does not condemn him whom God has justified—that a man may be an eminent saint and yet fall into grievous sins.

In regard to David and the characters of the Old Testament, as compared with those of the New, we are to reflect on the entirely different characters of the two dispensations. The one was the shadow and the type, the other was the substance and the reality, of a true Church. The eminent men of the Jewish Church were not necessarily more than the types of saints—the eminent men of the Christian Church were saints in reality. David was a man after God's own heart in a Jewish, not in a Christian sense—in his official and representative rather than in his personal and spiritual character. The Apostle John was the beloved of Jesus, not only representatively but actually, because he had the love of Jesus eminently in him.

We could not imagine any one of David's stamp being an apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ. Yet David himself is not to be judged by a Christian but by a Jewish standard. So Christians are not to be judged by a Jewish but by a Christian standard: and except their righteousness exceed the righteousness, not only of the strictest sect, but even of some of the most eminent men, of the Jewish religion, they cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

While it is necessary for us to be guarded against casting the mantle of David's piety over some of his actions, we are nevertheless to honour him for the good and generous deeds he performed; and not least for those noble instances of clemency and forbearance which he manifested towards Saul, when he could have rid himself at once of a malevolent enemy and a powerful rival. From such actions as these we may learn some of the highest lessons of Christian virtue; for what is more forcibly inculcated by our Lord than love towards our enemies, and forgiveness to those who sin against us? "Bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust." An enlightened Christian charity may act in some cases and in some respects differently from the manner in which love to the neighbour acted under the Jewish dispensation; but the charity we exercise should not be less, but ought to be still more, tender and forgiving. If under a dispensation in which men were allowed to hate their enemies, such instances of love as this of David were exhibited, how much more should we be disposed to forgive men their

trespasses ; knowing also that unless we forgive men their trespasses neither will our heavenly Father forgive us.

The history before us shows also the effect which the practice of love and forbearance may have on those to whom they are manifested. Saul, notwithstanding the unreasonable and unnatural cruelty of his disposition and conduct towards David, was yet overcome with tenderness at the discovery of his clemency. When David held up the skirt of Saul's robe, and told him how he might, and, had he yielded to persuasion, would have cut off his life instead, the hard heart of the king was melted into tenderness, and he was penetrated with a sense of shame. "He lifted up his voice, and wept. And he said to David, Thou art more righteous than I: for thou hast rewarded me good, whereas I have rewarded thee evil." He desired that the Lord might reward David good for what he had done unto him ; and bowed in submission to the Divine decree that David should be king of Israel. This better frame of mind was indeed of but short duration. And in this case we find a striking exemplification of the truth we have already alluded to, that when our better feelings are active only when they are excited from without, the impression lasts no longer than the presence of the cause that produced them. Saul soon returned to his former frame of mind ; and so will every repentant relapse into his former condition, or into one still worse, if he has no inward principle to sustain and guide him. But it is now time to pass on to the contemplation of the spiritual meaning of the circumstance on which we are now engaged.

As representative of the state of the kingdom of Israel, as itself representing the state of the Israelitish Church, the cutting off of the skirt of Saul's robe by David, and his retaining it in his hand, represented the transfer of the kingdom from Saul to David ; Saul himself recognised this symbolical meaning in the fact. "Now, behold, I know," said the humbled monarch, "that thou shalt surely be king, and that the kingdom of Israel shall be established in thine hand."

Looking at the circumstances before us in a higher sense, as relating to the kingdom of the Lord in ourselves, and regarding Saul and David as representing the natural and the spiritual mind, the particulars related will be found to describe some state of experience, and to contain some lesson of Christian instruction.

Regarding David as representing the inner man or spiritual mind, and Saul as representing the outer man or natural mind, the present circumstance presents another striking and beautiful illustration of the truth, which we have had occasion more than once to state, that the natural mind in its yet unregenerated state is at enmity with the spiritual, while the spiritual, on the other hand, has no enmity against

the natural, but is in the constant desire of reconciling and uniting it to itself. This is evident from the general temper and conduct of David and Saul to each other, but it is described in particular in the act and in the words of David.

As the wilderness is the symbol of temptation, the character of the temptation is indicated by the wilderness which represents it. What is represented by the wilderness of Engedi may be known from the spiritual meaning of Engedi itself, which occurs in a part of the Scriptures which has an obviously spiritual meaning. In the 47th of Ezekiel Engedi is mentioned in connection with the new or mystical temple, and as sharing largely in the blessings diffused by the river of the water of life issuing from under the threshold of the temple eastward. Of these waters it is said at the 8th verse: "These waters go down into the desert, and go into the sea, whose waters shall be healed. And it shall come to pass, that every thing that liveth, which moveth, whithersoever the rivers shall come, shall live: and there shall be a very great multitude of fish, because these waters shall come thither. . . . And it shall come to pass, that the fishers shall stand upon it from Engedi even unto En-eglaim; they shall be a place to spread forth nets; their fish shall be according to their kinds, as the fish of the great sea, exceeding many. But the miry places thereof and the marishes thereof shall not be healed; they shall be given to salt."

That to which the living waters flowed was the desert of Judea, that into which it flowed was the Dead Sea. This desert was that in which, under the name of the wilderness of Judea, John the Baptist appeared, and first preached the Gospel of glad tidings to the world; and in that instance the vision of the living waters may be considered to have received an external representative fulfilment. But spiritually understood, the desert and the sea, restored to life and fruitfulness by the river of living waters, are expressive emblems of the will and understanding of the natural mind, in themselves desert and dead, restored by the reception of Divine truth to life and fruitfulness.

This great desert of Judea was the wilderness of Engedi, and in it, near the banks of the Dead Sea, stood the town of Engedi, En-eglaim occupying a site on the other side of Jordan, in the land of Moab, inhabited by the tribe of Reuben. The two places thus connected the inheritance of the tribes in Canaan with that of the tribes beyond the river Jordan. So abundant are the fish in the healed waters of the Dead Sea, that fishers occupy its banks from Engedi to En-eglaim: the fish denoting living truths, and fishing the acquirement of such truths for the purposes of the spiritual life, the fishers denoting the rational faculty itself by which truth is sought and acquired.

From Engedi to En-eglaim is from the inmost to the outermost of the natural mind; which is in some measure evident from the names

themselves ; for Engedi means the fountain of the kid, and En-eglaim the fountain of the two calves, both signifying the good of innocence in the external man, the kid that which is interior, the calf that which is exterior.

The wilderness of Engedi, into which the living waters of the sanctuary flowed, is thus a symbol of the natural mind in its yet unregenerate state, but of that mind considered in its relation to the highest affection of the spiritual mind, represented by Judah, rendered still more specific by being here called, not the wilderness of Judah, but of Engedi.

A temptation represented by the wilderness of Engedi is, therefore, one that assaults the innocence that resides in the interior of the natural mind—that innocence which is stored up therein by the providence of the Lord during infancy and childhood, and to which additions have been made in the course of the regenerate life, while acting from disinterested love and charity. For whenever we act from an affection of love to God and the neighbour, with a childlike forgetfulness of self, the divinely treasured-up innocence of our early life is increased and exalted. But no state is improved and confirmed without trial. The pure silver is not separated from the dross of our corrupt nature without passing through some fiery ordeals ; and such trials are represented by those which David so often endured and was now subjected to.

The cave in which David and Saul were brought into such close connection with each other, and where David was tempted, so far as the persuasion of his followers and every consideration of self-interest and feeling of self-love could tempt him, to destroy Saul, is a fit symbol of that obscure state into which the mind is so often brought during times of trial. How blessed when, amidst the gloom which temporal or spiritual affliction casts over the mind, there is a principle in the soul that remains faithful to the law of mercy and truth, however great the temptation may be to violate it.

Saul, though personally corrupt, was still the Lord's anointed. He was the representative of truth Divine, not to be destroyed by Divine truth, but to be sifted by Satan, who may burn the chaff, but has no power to destroy the wheat. It is not the purpose of the Lord's saving operation in the human mind that any principle which has good in it should be destroyed, but that the good should be separated from the evil, and preserved. The contest between the inner and the outer man is to determine which shall have dominion ; and it is the Divine purpose that this contest, which originates with the natural or outer man, shall end in the establishment of the dominion of the inner man, for this is the order of heavenly government. The natural mind, prone to the earth, cannot be raised at once above its own hereditary and even

acquired condition, and brought willingly to acquiesce in the supremacy of that principle to which it was intended to be subordinate and subservient. But even when the natural man is still rebellious and unwilling to yield submission to the rule of the spiritual, there may be partial, if there is not entire, control acquired over him. If the spiritual man cannot bring the whole of the natural man under his power, he may at least lay hold on his mantle, or retain the skirt of it in his hand. When the afflicted woman but touched the skirt of the Lord's garment, she was made whole of her disease. And this miracle was performed to teach us that whosoever lays hold of the Word of eternal truth and life, even of its lowest truths, will obtain the virtue that flows from the Lord's saving love and wisdom. So David, by taking and retaining the skirt of Saul's mantle, represented that he who lays hold of the ultimate of truth of the natural mind, has obtained the power which will enable him finally to acquire dominion over and possession of the whole. One great object of spiritual trial, besides confirming the inner man in the love of goodness and the faith of truth, is to bring the outer man to see and acknowledge the rightful claim and inevitable destiny of the inner man to be king, and to have the kingdom established in his hand. This has been effected, for the time at least, in the case of Saul, or of him whom Saul represented. But this transfer of power is not to be effected at once, nor even acquiesced in by one peaceful conquest of the spiritual mind over the natural. Our Lord was engaged in spiritual conflict to the end of His life. His state of destitution was like that of David. "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head." Like David with Saul, He returned good for evil to His persecutors; and when pressed by His disciples to bring down fire from heaven to consume His enemies, He, like David, when advised to slay Saul, told them they knew not what manner of spirit they were of. If David, in his merciful conduct to Saul, was a faithful type of the Lord Jesus, so was he also of what the Lord's disciple should be.

There is a distinction, however, to be made between Saul as David's enemy, and those who were the enemies both of David and of Saul, those who cared not for the transfer of the kingdom from Saul to David, but desired its destruction. These are the enemies of all true order; and, like the nations who invaded the land of Israel, and like the mercenary dealers who desecrated the temple, they are to be driven out. The natural mind itself, however, like Lot when made captive by the kings, must be preserved and delivered from captivity, and restored to a state of freedom (Gen. xiv.). And even when there is a difference between the thoughts and affections of the natural mind and the spiritual, as there was a contention between the herdsmen of Abram and the herdsmen of Lot, our language should be that of Abram on the

occasion, "Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdsmen and thy herdsmen ; for we be brethren."

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE THREATENED EFFECTS OF NABAL'S CHURLISHNESS ARE
AVERTED BY ABIGAIL'S PRUDENCE.

1 Samuel xxv.

SAMUEL died, and he received the tribute due to a great prophet, for all the Israelites were gathered together and lamented him, and buried him in his house in Ramah, his own native town. Natural death and burial are, to the righteous, spiritual life and resurrection ; and Samuel's death at this time may indicate not only life and immortality to himself, but the beginning of a new and higher life to the kingdom, and greater stability to the throne and the altar, which he had been he means of doing so much to establish.

We can hardly suppose that David would venture to appear among the assembled Israelites when they mourned for Samuel ; but it is stated immediately after, that he arose, and went down to the wilderness of Paran. Paran was out of the land of Canaan. The wilderness of Paran was the home of Ishmael (Gen. xxi. 21), one of the resting-places of the Israelites in their journey (Num. x. 2), and the place from which the men were sent to spy the land (xiii. 3). The meaning of the wilderness may be known from the meaning of the mount, as spoken of by Moses and by Habakkuk. Moses says, "The Lord came from Sinai, and rose up from Seir unto them ; He shined forth from mount Paran, and He came with ten thousands of saints : from His right hand went forth a fiery law for them" (Deut. xxxiii. 2) ; and Habakkuk says, "God came from Teman, and the Holy One from mount Paran. His glory covered the heavens, and the earth was full of His praise" (iii. 3). Seir and Teman have relation to celestial love, and mount Paran to spiritual love. The wilderness of Paran, considered as a place of refuge in states of trial, signifies temptation in regard to spiritual love ; as a dwelling-place, it means the life of the spiritual man as to good. Paran itself spiritually means illumination from the Lord's Divine humanity. Regarding David as a type of the Lord, his going down to the wilderness of Paran describes the Lord's humbling Himself, to endure, for our sakes, some of the deepest of the temptations by which He made His humanity Divine, so that His glory might cover the heavens and the earth be full of His praise, and from the right hand of His power might go forth the fiery law of His

love. For it is to the Lord Jesus that the words of Moses and Habakkuk relate. And for what was it that the Lord came from mount Paran, with the ten thousands of His saints, but that He first went down to the wilderness of Paran, as He here does in the person of His representative, with the small band of His humble followers? "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory?"

We have entered thus minutely into this particular, principally because of its connection with what now follows.

The sacred writer relates that "there was a man in Maon whose possessions were in Carmel; and the man was very great, and he had three thousand sheep, and a thousand goats: and he was shearing his sheep in Carmel. Now the name of the man was Nabal; and the name of his wife was Abigail: and she was a woman of good understanding, and of a beautiful countenance: but the man was churlish and evil in his doings; and he was of the house of Caleb." The inspired historian goes on to relate that David, hearing that Nabal was shearing his sheep in Carmel, sent ten of his young men to him, saying, "Give, I pray thee, whatsoever cometh to thine hand unto thy servants, and to thy son David." This was asked on the ground that David and his men had been guardians of his possessions and protectors of his shepherds. The respectful request Nabal insultingly refused. On receiving his answer, David, with four hundred men, went up with hostile intent to go to Carmel. But Abigail learning how matters stood, went, with abundance of provisions, to meet the insulted and incensed leader of this determined band. The result was that David was propitiated, and Abigail was sent away in peace. On her return she found Nabal holding a feast like the feast of a king, and she was prudently silent; but in the morning she told him, when his heart became as a stone, and in ten days the Lord smote him that he died. When David heard of the death of Nabal, he sent and communed with Abigail, and she became his wife.

This is the meagre outline of a narrative which occupies the whole of a long chapter. No explanation of it appears in our author's published writings; but in what may be regarded as his first essay as an expositor, in a commentary which he laid aside to write his first and greatest work, "*Arcana Cœlestia*," he enters minutely into the subject, and explains it according to what he himself has called the internal historical sense, so far as he then perceived it.

The Messiah is represented by David; the Jewish people by Nabal: the representative Church, which, according to order, was instituted very much like the ancient Church, by Abigail, whom afterwards the Messiah, understood by David, married, and delivered from those

who are signified by Nabal. It may be necessary here to say that, while dispensations change, the Church remains ever the same. The Church itself consists of the immutable principles of love to God and charity to men; but these have a different quality according to the truth to which they are united or adjoined. The Church, as it has existed under its several dispensations, is like a woman who has been married successively to several husbands. The womanly character of her love remains essentially the same in all her unions, but it is modified in each according to the wisdom of the husband. Love to God and man were different, because they were differently understood, under the Israelitish dispensation from what they had been under the ancient, and from what they became under the Christian dispensation. Yet the Israelitish dispensation, as it existed according to Divine order, although a lower, was not a distorted, form of the ancient Church. It could not have been a representative Church, nor even the representative of a Church, if its institutions had not been according to Divine order. The dispensation, however, degenerated, and when the Lord came into the world the Jewish people had become as Nabal; they reviled and refused to admit the claims of Him whom David represented, although He had been the Shepherd of their shepherds and Guardian of their flocks.

Nabal is described as very great, having three thousand sheep and a thousand goats. The Jewish people, to whom the representative Church, as a wife, was adjoined, were great and rich in spiritual things, compared with the nations around them. Yet the charity and faith which they possessed in abundance, and which are meant by Nabal's thousands of sheep and goats, were rather of the letter than of the spirit. The character of the people, in regard to their possessions, may be indicated by what is added to the description of Nabal's wealth, that he was shearing his sheep in Carmel. For although sheep-shearing has its favourable meaning, it has also its unfavourable side, since there are shepherds who care more for the fleece than for the flock. These are the evil shepherds, against whom a woe is pronounced, because they eat the fat and clothe themselves with the wool (Ezek. xxxiv. 2). Nor does this apply to those only, who are usually meant by pastors; but is to be understood of all whose care for religion is not for its own sake, but for the sake of honour and gain.

Nabal was shearing his sheep in Carmel. This is not the Carmel so celebrated in Scripture for its richness and beauty, and which, from its vineyards, signifies the spiritual Church; but seems to have been a place rich in pasture, and has therefore a lower though similar meaning. Yet although Nabal was shearing his sheep in Carmel, that was not his native place. He is indeed called a Carmelite (xxx. 5; 2 Sam.

ii. 2) from his residing in Carmel, but he is described as a man of Maon, whose possessions were in Carmel, and which he may have acquired through Abigail, who was in all probability a native Carmelitess, as she is called (xxviii. 5). The Jewish people, to whom the representative Church was adjoined, were like the man of Maon united to a woman of Carmel; and the affections of charity and the perceptions of faith which they possessed, and which were represented by Nabal's flocks, took their character from Carmel, in whose pastures Nabal fed his flocks, rather than from the wilderness of Maon, where his native town was, thus from Abigail rather than from Nabal. The Jews were rather the custodians than the possessors of the spiritual principles of the Church, which they preserved in representatives till the coming of the Lord, who removed the veil and brought all hidden things to light.

Abigail is described as a woman of good understanding and of a beautiful countenance, but Nabal as churlish and evil in his doings. The Church described by Abigail, like the primitive, was of good understanding, which consisted in understanding what was represented by types and other things of a like nature; and was of a beautiful countenance, beauty in the interior sense denoting goodness and in the inmost sense holiness. The churlishness and evil-doing of her husband describes the disposition and character of the Jewish people, to whom the Church represented by Abigail was as a wife.

David sending to Nabal with a salutation of peace, and asking that the young men may find favour in his eyes, and receive of his hand some beneficence for themselves and for his son David, represents what the Lord Himself describes in His parables, the lord sending his servants to receive from the husbandmen of the fruits of the vineyard. But the Jewish people treated the Lord's servants as Nabal treated David's young men. As Nabal refused to acknowledge David, and reviled him, so the people refused to acknowledge the Messiah, and inveighed against Him continuously, just as the husbandmen of the parable shamefully treated their lord's servants, and not only sent them away empty, but killed the son, who was the heir, when he at last came to them, as they had killed some of his servants, that the inheritance might be their own.

David's going up with his armed men with the intention of slaying Nabal and his household, is also expressed in the same parable by what the Lord's hearers said, in answer to His question, "When the lord therefore of the vineyard cometh, what will he do unto those husbandmen? They say unto Him, He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out his vineyard unto other husbandmen, who shall render him the fruits in their seasons." This, however, was what

the Jews deserved at the Lord's hand, not what He inflicted upon them. The vineyard was indeed taken from them, and given to others, but the Jews destroyed themselves as did Nabal, and as did afterwards Judas, by both of whom the Jews were represented.

In the crisis which affairs had now reached by Nabal's churlish conduct, a young man told Abigail how David had sent messengers out of the wilderness, and his master had railed on them, although the men had been very good unto Nabal's shepherds, and they were not hurt, neither missed anything, as long as they were conversant with them, when in the fields ; and the young man entreated his mistress to consider what she would do, for evil was determined against the master and his household. In this is narrated, respecting the Jewish Church, that she had been preserved by the Messiah, that she had not suffered dishonour, and had been often delivered from her enemies ; that she missed or wanted nothing during all the time He dwelt with them, for He dwelt with them when they called upon the Lord, that is, when they were in the field, and when they fed their flocks. Wherefore the Church, as the wife, is admonished by her pastors and others that evil is determined. But Nabal is a son of Belial.

Abigail, when warned by the servant, "made haste, and took two hundred loaves, and two bottles of wine, and five sheep ready dressed, and five measures of parched corn, and an hundred clusters of raisins, and two hundred cakes of figs, and laid them on asses." That is, the Church, represented by Abigail, with the eager earnestness signified by haste, took spiritual good and truth, meant by bread and wine ; and rational good and truth, meant by the dressed sheep and the raisins ; and natural good, meant by figs, and disposed them in the scientifics or knowledges of good and truth, meant by asses. Abigail, having sent on her servants before her, went forth to meet David, "and it was so, as she rode on the ass, that she came down by the covert of the hill, and, behold, David and his men came down against her ; and she met them. And when Abigail saw David, she lighted off the ass, and fell before David on her face, and bowed herself to the ground, and fell at his feet." This Oriental mode of salutation is very expressive of that profound humiliation and self-abasement which the Church owes to the Lord, and which Abigail's prostration represents. The wife of Nabal, by her address to David, shows herself to be a woman of good understanding. "Upon me, my lord," she exclaims, "upon me let this iniquity be," and she proceeds to plead her cause with words of more than human eloquence ; for the words Abigail now speaks, she speaks, our author says, by the Spirit of the Lord, for they contain within them things Divine. First she throws herself at his feet, which expresses adoration. She confesses iniquity in herself, saying, "Upon me let this iniquity be." She describes the people by her husband, calling him

foolish, as his name imports ; like the people, he was foolish, nay, might be considered insane ; so that to punish the foolish for their insanity would be contrary to justice. She implores only for grace. Abigail pleads that she had not seen David's young men, when they came to and were repelled by her husband, which signifies the representative Church, which was pure like the primitive. So the Church brings gifts, which are spiritual things, such as burnt-offerings and sacrifices, meat-offerings and drink-offerings, sin-offerings and peace-offerings, which constituted the externals of worship in the representative Church, and which were expressed by the gifts now offered by Abigail to David—by the Church to the Messiah.

Abigail prays David to forgive the trespass of his handmaid ; for the Lord would certainly make him a sure house : because he fighteth the battles of the Lord, and evil had not been found in him all his days. This is truly descriptive of the Messiah, and of Him only. He it is who forgives sin, by removing it ; for He fought the battles of the Lord in His conflicts with the powers of darkness, and His victories over them ; and which He still does in opposing and overcoming the evils of the human heart, wherein, as well as in His general Church, the Lord makes for Him a sure house, because they are built on the foundation of truth and righteousness. He and He alone it is in whom evil hath not been found all His days ; for He alone of all men lived without sin.

“Yet a man,” she says, “has risen to pursue thee, and to seek thy soul.” Saul is here distinguished from the enemies of the Lord against whom David fought ; for although Saul fought against David, David did not fight against him. Nay, while both fought the battles of the Lord, David had to endure this separate and internal conflict. This, we have seen, and will have occasion further to show, is entirely consistent with the view of the antagonism of the letter to the spirit, or rather of the apparent truths of the letter, through which temptations come, to the spirit, against which they are directed ; whereas the “enemies” are the evil spirits themselves that tempt, like that by which Saul was possessed. “But,” Abigail continues, “the soul of my lord shall be bound in the bundle of life with the Lord thy God ; and the souls of thine enemies, them shall he sling out, as out of the middle of a sling. And it shall come to pass, when the Lord shall have done to my lord according to all the good that He hath spoken concerning thee, and shall have appointed thee ruler over Israel ; that this shall be no grief unto thee, nor offence of heart unto my lord, either that thou hast shed blood causeless, or that my lord hath avenged himself : but when the Lord shall have dealt well with my lord, then remember thine handmaid.” This, according to our author, clearly treats of the life after death, and the last judgment.

The souls of the righteous shall be bound up in the bundle of life with the Lord God, and the wicked, who are meant by His enemies, shall be cast out, as from the middle of a sling; and Jehovah, when He shall have done or accomplished all the good that He hath spoken concerning Him, shall He make ruler over Israel. The supplication of Abigail for the house of Nabal, like that of Abraham for the inhabitants of Sodom, is a prayer of the Church for her people, her children, that in the judgment the innocent may not perish with the guilty. Abigail's final petition, "when the Lord shall have dealt well with my lord, then remember thine hand-maid," is, spiritually, a prayer that the sin of the people may not bring ruin upon the Church which has been united or adjoined to them—that though the dispensation should perish, the Church may remain.

David listens to Abigail's prayer. He blesses the Lord God of Israel for having sent her to meet him, and blesses her for having, by her blessed advice, kept him from shedding blood, and avenging himself with his own hand, since, except she had come, he would, by the morning light, have left no male alive. He receives the present she had brought him, and desires her to go up in peace to her house. Thus it repented him; for he had hearkened to her voice, and accepted her person. This, understood of the Lord and His Church, presents the subject of the relation that exists between them, and of the influence they have upon each other, as we find it represented in Scripture. According to the letter of the Word, the Lord is determined to take vengeance on the people for their sins, but by the penitence and entreaty, either of themselves or of one who takes their place, He is turned from the fierceness of His anger to clemency and mercy. Yet we know there is no anger in God, no shadow of turning from His infinite love and mercy. Still the appearance of God's anger against sinners, and His taking vengeance on them for their sins, expresses a terrible reality. It expresses nothing less than the absolute opposition and irreconcilable hostility between holiness and sinfulness—holiness in God and sinfulness in man; while the seeming ease with which the Lord is propitiated, and His vengeance gives place to mercy, expresses the encouraging truth, that penitence never fails to remove hostility and effect reconciliation, since it removes sin, which is the only cause of hostile separation. David had threatened that by the morning light he would have left none of Nabal's household alive. The morning is a time for judgment. "O house of David, thus saith the Lord; Execute judgment in the morning, and deliver him that is spoiled out of the hand of the oppressor, lest My fury go out like fire, and burn that none can quench it, because of the evil of your doings" (Jer. xxi. 12). Yet David's vengeance was to have been executed before the

morning light, so that the dawn of a new day would have found his house desolate. In accordance with the view, that the subject of this chapter is the end of the Jewish and the beginning of the Christian dispensation, the words of David imply that, but for the interposition of the representative Church amongst them, the Jewish people would have been unable to endure the Lord's presence among them, even when veiled in humanity. Had not John the Baptist, by preaching and baptizing, prepared the way of the Lord, His presence would have smitten the earth with a curse, the Church would have perished with the dispensation, and the morning light would have shone on impenetrable darkness and gloom.

But that which David was dissuaded from doing to the whole house of Nabal, the foolish man did to himself. On Abigail's return she found her husband feasting, and Nabal's heart was merry within him, for he was very drunken. Spiritually understood, this feast, which was like that of a king, is the profanation of goodness and truth, which is meant by eating and drinking to excess. So we find the consummation of the age described. The days of the Son of Man, when He was to come to judgment, were to be like the days of Noah, when they did eat and drink, until the Flood came; and like the days of Lot, when they also ate and drank, and fire and brimstone were rained from heaven, and destroyed them all, except the remnant that, in both cases, were saved. When Abigail told Nabal, his heart died within him, and he became as a stone. And it came to pass about ten days after, that the Lord smote Nabal, that he died. The heart dies when all love, which is the life of the will, is extinguished; and man himself becomes a stone—not merely as a stone—when nothing remains of religion but a hard and lifeless faith. Nabal becoming a stone, like Lot's wife becoming a pillar of salt, is representative, not only of the extinction of the life of truth, which is charity, but the perversion of the truth itself.

When David heard of Nabal's death, he sent and communed with Abigail, to take her to him to wife. The description of Abigail's coming to David, with her five damsels, like the five wise virgins that went in with the bridegroom to the marriage, is a spiritual description of the marriage of the Lord with the Church, her five damsels representing the spiritual affections and graces which belong to the Church, and are attendant upon her. Thus the Church which had been joined to the Jewish people, became, at the end of the Jewish dispensation, in the true sense the Lord's bride and wife, for He having become Man, was in the full sense the bridegroom and husband of His Church. But by the Incarnation, the Lord not only united to Himself the Church as it existed among the Jews, but also as it existed among the Gentiles. This Church was represented by

Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, whom also David took to wife ; and Abigail and Ahinoam were both of them his wives. "But Saul had given Michal his daughter, David's wife, to Phalti, the son of Laish, which was of Gallim." We have already seen that Michal, the daughter of Saul, represented a natural affection, and we shall have further opportunities of seeing this exemplified. Saul intended her to be a snare to David ; and when she no longer served that purpose, she was given to another. According to the custom of the times, when women were considered the property of their parents, and might be disposed of at their pleasure, Michal, like Samson's wife, was given to another man, without the consent of her husband, or even without consulting him. Saul may have had the same seeming justification that the parents of Samson's wife pleaded. Michal did not share David's fortunes during his fugitive life ; and Saul may have considered that he was justified in annulling David's claim to her as his wife. From a higher point of view, the history of Michal shows her to have represented the Church more as the daughter of Saul than as the spouse of David, partaking more of the merely human than of the purely Divine element, more of the affection of truth Divine than of Divine truth, yet capable of being joined now to one and now to the other ; like Adonis living alternately in the upper and in the lower world, and serving in some measure to connect them with each other. Michal is now away from David and joined to Phalti, who, we shall see, has to render her up to David again.

CHAPTER XIX.

DAVID PENETRATES SAUL'S CAMP AND TAKES HIS SPEAR.

1 *Samuel* xxvi.

THE subject of the present chapter is so similar in its character to that which formed the subject of a previous one, that we have to some extent anticipated the lesson which it must be our main object to deduce from it. Had its moral tone been different we might have passed it over, not as being less Divine and instructive, but as being less necessary for our instruction, after dwelling on an incident the leading features of which are the same. Those parts of the sacred history which present more of the dark side of human nature are not less necessary to show us what human nature really is, than are those which exhibit its bright side to show us what it is capable of becoming. But it is pleasant, and may be made profitable, to linger at those brighter and fresher spots which we meet with in our progress through

the historical Word, as it is at those we meet with in our progress through the historical world.

Much as we meet with in the Scriptures, in their simple literal sense, that is painfully indicative of the degraded state of human nature, and which may well convince us of the truth of the Scripture declaration, that the heart of man is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked, there are yet some things that no less pleasingly exhibit the nobility of human nature, and its capability of being restored by regeneration, which is a new creation, to the image and likeness of God.

Natural men have, it is true, exhibited beautiful traits of humanity, in times of war and in moments of triumph, as well as in seasons of peace and periods of humiliation. All these reveal the divinity of man's origin, and the presence of God in the minds and affairs of men, even when He is in heart unacknowledged. The good of the natural and even of the wicked man is from the same origin as that of the spiritual and righteous. There is none good but one, that is God. Good in the creature is from the Creator, and is the Creator's in him. The fragrant scent and blushing beauty of the rose are not more truly dependent on the influence of the sun of this world, than are all kind feelings and beautiful thoughts on the Sun of heaven; they all have their beginning in Him who causes His sun to rise alike on the evil and on the good. There is, nevertheless, a wide difference between the spiritual and the natural man. On one point it is this. The spiritual man traces all that he possesses of the good and the beautiful to Him who gives it, and returns it in grateful acknowledgment to its bountiful Giver, connecting himself by means of the gift with Him who bestows it. The natural man regards himself as the author of whatever good he possesses or performs, and, by claiming the merit which is due to God, cuts himself off from that conjunction which is effected by reciprocation. The natural man, with all his excellences, remains natural, because he looks not and desires not above nature. His virtues are full of himself, and are therefore inwardly tainted with his natural corruptions. The virtues of the spiritual man are spiritual, because the Spirit of the Lord is in them, and that which gives them an eternal end gives them an eternal existence.

While, therefore, we contemplate those manifestations of the good and the beautiful in human conduct, of which we find such fine examples in the Sacred Scriptures, we should ascribe them to that Being in whom all that is good originates, and regard them as the shadow of His wings, falling upon this world of ours, to relieve the lurid light which the fire of unhallowed passion sheds upon it. And as the Gospel requires us to be perfect even as our Father in heaven is perfect, all that in the human character which reflects anything of

the Divine, we should seek to realize in our own, that we may be assimilated to the likeness of Him in whom all perfection dwells.

The beautiful incident which we are now to consider differs in a few particulars from that which engaged our attention in the twenty-fourth chapter.

It was after David had left the wilderness of Paran, and had taken up his abode in the wilderness of Ziph, that Saul, again thirsting for his blood, set out with three thousand of his men in search of him. The wilderness of Ziph is in the territory of the tribe of Judah, and Hachilah is at no great distance from Engedi, where the previous encounter of David with Saul, so similar in its character to the present, took place. The desert still points to a state of temptation, and Hachilah, the "dark" or "dusky," indicates, as some other particulars to which we shall have occasion to advert, a state of temptation having more immediate relation to the understanding than to the will. And wherever indeed two circumstances, and even two expressions, occur in the Word, similar to each other, one relates to the will and the other to the understanding, as the two faculties of the mind in which the principles of love and faith have their abode, and which are to be distinctly perfected by regeneration. It was in the dark hill of Hachilah that Saul pitched when in pursuit of David; and here the singularly interesting circumstances took place, which so strongly mark the conduct of David as generous and forbearing. When David, who abode in the wilderness, heard that Saul had come indeed, he arose and came to the place where Saul had pitched. Without some Divine impulse to prompt or Divine voice to direct him, it is difficult to account for David's venturing into the midst of the camp, where the sacred person of the king was surrounded by three thousand men, and no doubt usually guarded by his immediate attendants. He found them indeed asleep; but this was not the ordinary condition of the camp, but was produced supernaturally, "because a deep sleep from the Lord was fallen upon them." The same supernatural agency must have acted upon David, to lead him into the midst of his enemies. Nor can we reasonably doubt that a Divine influence caused him to act that noble part, by which he again disarmed the wrath and won the admiration of his cruel persecutor.

So is it with the Christian. In times of danger the Lord provides for the safety of those who trust in Him. David himself has uttered the language of the Christian in these times of tribulation: "Though an host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear: though war should rise against me, in this will I be confident." And this confidence, in circumstances corresponding to the present, may be expressed in other words of the same inspired writer: "The stout-hearted are spoiled, they have slept their sleep: and none of the men

of might have found their hands. At Thy rebuke, O God of Jacob, both the chariot and horse are cast into a dead sleep." What then is this sleep into which the Lord casts the enemies of His people, the persecutors of the souls of the innocent—of those very enemies and persecutors that are to be found in our own bosoms? For in our own hearts is the war of the flesh against the spirit, the world against heaven, and self against God, in which all our conflicts of a spiritual kind consist. Briefly, spiritual war is the opposition of the natural mind against the spiritual. It is the natural mind that is laid asleep; and during the state which is represented by sleep the spiritual mind descends into it and performs its beneficent work, which that of David in the camp of Saul represented. The particular condition of the mind here and in similar instances meant by sleep, is that state in which the appetites and passions of the natural mind are brought into a state of quiescence. When sickness or misfortune fall upon men, while they are yet in a comparatively natural state, their minds are subdued, their eagerness in pursuit of the world and their desires for the advancement of self are moderated; and some would then freely give up all they possess or had desired in exchange for their soul.

A still deeper sleep may fall upon the natural mind without these natural agencies. The fear of death and judgment has a still greater influence on minds in a certain religious condition—a condition in which there is more dread of hell than love of heaven—in which the conscience accuses rather than excuses. When the Scriptures talk of judgment, how many like Felix tremble; and their rebellious motions are quelled for the moment within them. The natural appetites and passions are cast into a sleep still more profound when, not merely a dread of punishment, but a conviction and sense of sin are impressed upon the mind. The sleep of passion produced by any of these causes is from the Lord; for it is His Providence and His Spirit that bring men into this state. The effects produced may in some cases be but temporary; like Saul, the mind may return to its former state; but even when contrition is temporary, it is not entirely useless. Even with those who are being regenerated, there are alternations of state. Theirs is not a life of sinning and repenting; but they have their times of disturbance and tranquillity, of sleep and wakefulness, of joy and sorrow. Those who are spiritually minded have indeed states and experiences peculiar to themselves, states in which these apparently, and in some sense really, opposite conditions of life exist at the same time. They may be subject to outward tribulation while they enjoy inward peace, they may be in outward obscurity while they have inward light, and their sensuous nature may be cast into a deep sleep while their spiritual is in a state of complete wakefulness. In relation to the regenerating man, who is still in the wilderness, this

state is represented by the scene which the present part of the history presents to our minds. Saul and all his host are buried in profound slumber, while David and his companion penetrate into the very midst of the camp, and take away from the pillow of the king his spear and his cruse of water.

And when the rebellious passions of our natural man are quelled into rest, when a deep sleep from the Lord, by any of His providential acts or spiritual operations, has fallen upon them, and our spiritual man is awake, and has ascertained the condition of the mind below, then is the time to go down, and pass through, and enter into the very inmost of the natural thoughts and affections, to examine, that we may discover their real state, with the view of depriving them of their power to injure our spiritual life, or of bringing them into harmony with it. Do we thus improve our opportunities? When the outward joyfulness of life is taken away, when the animal spirits are depressed, or when any more spiritual cause produces deep slumber in the propensities of the natural mind, do we, in the dark silence, enter faithfully if not fearlessly into self-examination? This is our duty, and if faithfully and judiciously performed, it will result in important advantage to our souls. Saul's wrath was, for the moment at least, turned away by the courageous but wise and merciful conduct of David, which thus proved the means of his present preservation, and no doubt had some share in making this the last attempt that Saul made upon his life. As on the former occasion, David was exhorted to kill Saul, and rid himself at once of his enemy; but David still retained his veneration for Saul as the Lord's anointed. As on the previous occasion, too, he did what was necessary to show that he had the power if disposed to use it. He took away from the king's bolster the spear and the cruse of water: two of the most necessary means for the defence and support of his life. And when he had awakened the king, he showed him these as evidences of his power and mercy.

And what does this teach us in regard to ourselves? It instructs us that when the duty of self-examination is faithfully performed, it will result in transferring all the power of the natural man to the spiritual, and in convincing the natural man himself that his life and the means of it belong to the spiritual. This act of David, like that of cutting off the skirt of Saul's robe, may be considered prophetic of his future possession of the kingly power; and such is every corresponding act of the mind. The spiritual mind acquires dominion over the natural gradually, and by successive acts; but it is not till it has made its last conquest that the kingdom or government is entirely its own. Every act, however, makes its power felt and acknowledged, and brings some degree of submission, and prepares the way for a more unreserved, and finally for a full surrender. The cruse of water and the spear are

symbols of truth as the means of support and defence, though sometimes turned by the natural man into means for his own support, independently of the spiritual, and for offence and defence against him. The true state of the case is, that all which the natural mind has of truth or of good belongs to the spiritual ; and it is not till this is seen and acknowledged, and until it is carried into practice, that there is a state of true harmony and union between the two conflicting parts of our nature, and the inner and outer man become truly one.

Until this is effected, we must expect tribulation, and we must or should be prepared to meet our trials, whatever they may be, with faithfulness, but with reverence and temperance. Let us not suppose that trials are only to be recognised in great calamities. Every day brings its trials, for every day brings some trial of our temper, our patience, our charity, our forbearance, our endurance. And our principles are tested and may be manifested in these as well, though not perhaps so much, as in matters of more seeming importance. There is nothing so small in the conduct of our minds and lives as to be unimportant ; and it may be well for us to remember that he who is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much. He who is faithful in the duties of a day is most likely to be faithful in the duties of a whole life ; and he who attends to the least of his thoughts and actions will be likely to attend to the greatest.

Whether, therefore, our trials and temptations be great or small, let us be faithful and trustful ; and the end will be peace.

CHAPTER XX.

DAVID ESCAPES INTO THE LAND OF THE PHILISTINES.

I *Samuel* xxvii.

THE conclusion of the previous chapter might lead us to expect that David's sorrows were now ended. Saul had asked him to return, and vowed he would do him no more harm. He had blessed him as his son, and seemed willing to recognise him as his heir. Yet the present chapter begins with the old plaint, as if no reconciliation had taken place : " I shall now perish one day by the hand of Saul." How soon the king had lost his good impressions and forgotten his solemn promise, and relapsed into his previous state of enmity, does not appear ; but a considerable interval of time separates the events recorded in these two chapters. But, however short or long the interval may have been, the lesson which Saul's conduct teaches us is equally impressive. No time should have effaced the sense of obligation to David which Saul

at the moment must have felt. The fact shows us that impressions may be powerful and yet superficial, and feelings intense and yet evanescent. The resolutions, therefore, that are formed under the influence of strong emotions, may be like the early dew that passeth away ; or like the seeds that "fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth : and forthwith they sprang up, because they had no deepness of earth : and when the sun was up, they were scorched ; and because they had no root, they withered away." Convictions and sentiments that are not rooted in the good ground of an honest heart, seldom continue to live when the sun of our self-love is up. The shallow soil of natural feeling may give a rapid growth to the seeds of truth and virtue, but they as rapidly die away. Of this Saul was a singularly striking example.

Knowing that the evil spirit was again upon Saul, inviting him to the frenzied pursuit of his innocent victim, David said in his heart, "There is nothing better for me than that I should speedily escape into the land of the Philistines ; and Saul shall despair of me, to seek me any more in any coast of Israel : so shall I escape out of his hand." David had already on a former occasion sought an asylum in the land of the Philistines, and with Achish the king of Gath. He then found that he had fled from one danger to fall into another ; now he was favourably received, and the city of Ziklag was given him ; wherefore Ziklag pertaineth unto the kings of Judah unto this day. In his first flight to Philistia he was alone ; now he had six hundred men, consisting chiefly of those who had joined him in the cave of Adullam, to which he had escaped when the servants of Achish aroused the suspicions of the monarch respecting him.

Philistia was the first and the last place of David's flight from Saul. We have seen that Philistia, like Egypt, is a stage in the journey of the faithful, in their progress through the chequered experience of the regenerate life. It is, however, one that belongs to a higher state or to a more advanced stage of the new life than Egypt, to the celestial and spiritual, but not to the natural. Abraham and Isaac, we have seen, sojourned in Philistia ; but the children of Israel, when they went up out of Egypt, were not permitted to pass through the land of the Philistines, though it was near, lest, seeing war, they might turn back. Not to the natural but to the spiritual stage of the new life does the experience represented by Philistia belong. It is a trial not of science but of faith, not of knowledge but of conviction, not of the letter but of the spirit. It was for this reason a place of David's sojourn, for he eminently represented the spiritual man. Yet it was to him a place of trial as well as of retreat. It is to some of the circumstances connected with David's second sojourn here that we have now to direct our attention.

One important effect of David's flight to Gath was that Saul sought no more again for him. Saul's persecution of David was now ended, although there is no reason to believe that his persecuting spirit had died out. One of the purposes for which the regal office had been instituted was the deliverance of Israel from the oppression of the Philistines. Had Saul opposed the great enemy of his people with the constancy and activity he displayed in pursuing him whom he regarded as his rival for the throne, especially had he availed himself of the services of the conqueror of Goliath, he might have freed his people from the oppression under which they groaned. Instead of this he threw his best friend into the arms of his worst enemy; and he who might have been the conqueror of the Philistines was soon to be conquered by them. The Philistines had saved David, by making an inroad into the land, and drawing Saul away from pursuing him; and they were now to afford him protection from all further pursuit. In doing this the Philistines were unconsciously preserving and increasing a power which was to undermine and finally overturn their own. Such are the ways in which Providence works out its own beneficent ends. The power of the natural and even of the natural-rational man would never be overcome by the power of the spiritual, were it not that the wrath of man can be made to work to the praise of God, and the remainder of wrath can be restrained. We have remarked that the conflicting passions tend to restrain each other. But this effects no true reformation. There must be a higher power that can restrain and subdue them all, and bring them into submission and subordination to itself. The supremacy of this power is effected by numerous Divine means, not only various but diverse, by permissions as well as by provisions. The Lord bends prejudices when they cannot be broken, restrains men by fear when they cannot be led by love, and makes even their self-love instrumental in leading them to the love of God. In our first religious impulse there is more fear of hell than love of heaven. There is love within the fear; but the love without the fear would be unable to impel us to forsake the broad road which leads to destruction, and enter the narrow way which leads to life. In our first faith there is self-confidence, like that which led Peter to say, "Though I should die with Thee, yet will I not deny Thee;" yet without this self-confidence our early faith would not have even the courage of intended martyrdom. In our first righteousness there is a feeling of merit, yet without this merit there would be no righteousness. There is thus a large ingredient of self in our early religion. And our Lord appeals to this element, as when He held out to those who followed Him, that they should sit upon thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. The Lord condescends to lead us by a lower motive till a higher be developed. For if we have any sincere

religion, a higher motive is within the lower, as the butterfly is within the caterpillar ; so that when the lower dies the higher comes forth into life. Within our early fear there is love, within our self-confidence there is trust, within our merit there is disinterestedness. By trial and tribulation, as well as by patience and perseverance, the kingdom of God is gradually established within us, and we ourselves become kings and priests unto God and the Father, which we are when the Lord's truth rules in our understandings and His love rules in our hearts.

David in Philistia is in this way preparing himself for ruling the kingdom of Israel, whose anointed king he already is. And in this he was the type of Him who was made perfect through suffering, and who, though the anointed, the holy thing, the Son of God, from His birth, or rather from His being conceived in the womb, had nevertheless to pass through a life of suffering as well as of holiness, before He ascended to His throne, and became the Ruler of His kingdom in heaven and on earth. And so of the disciple who follows His Lord.

When David appeared before Achish, he desired that the king would give him a place elsewhere than in the regal city ; and Achish gave him Ziklag ; wherefore Ziklag belongeth unto the kings of Judah unto this day. There is something interesting about the history of this town. It was one of the cities that fell to the lot of Judah (Josh. xv. 31) ; but as Judah's lot was too large for him, the children of Simeon received their inheritance within the inheritance of the children of Judah (xix. 1-9) ; and Ziklag passed over from Judah to Simeon (ver. 5). These two tribes were to each other as will and understanding ; and the understanding of the celestial man is derived from and is within the will, as the inheritance of the children of Simeon was taken from and was within the inheritance of the children of Judah. The will of the spiritual man is formed in the understanding ; the understanding of the celestial man is formed in the will. The spiritual man wills as he understands, the celestial man understands as he wills. The will and understanding of the celestial man are so completely united that they form, in a supereminent degree, one mind.

At the time to which the history relates Ziklag was subject to the Philistines, as the true to the false, but was assigned as a place of residence to David, when it passed into, and ever afterwards remained in, the hands of its true owners, the tribe and the kings of Judah.

From this "overflowing of a fountain," the emblem of living truth and beauty, David made two severe assaults upon some of the enemies of his people. He "and his men went up, and invaded the Geshurites, and the Gezrites, and the Amalekites : for those nations were of old the inhabitants of the land, as thou goest to Shur, even unto the land of Egypt." It is not difficult to see the meaning of these nations, situated as they were on the borders of Philistia, and on the way to Shur and

Egypt. The wilderness of Shur was the scene of the first temptation of the children of Israel, after leaving Egypt, when they thirsted for water (Exod. xv. 22), and Amalek was the first enemy that assailed them, when they were suffering from their second temptation in the wilderness of Sin (xvii. 8). The Amalekites, we have seen, represented falsity grounded in interior evil; and the two nations here associated with them represent confirming reasonings and science. But it is of the circumstances connected with David's invasion of these nations that I desire chiefly to speak. It is said that he left neither man nor woman alive, and that his object in utterly destroying the people was to prevent tidings being brought to Gath, where his doings might have caused censure and excited alarm. And when David was asked by the king where he had made a road that day, he said, "Against the south of Judah, and against the south of the Jerahmeelites, and against the south of the Kenites. And Achish believed David, saying, He hath made his people Israel utterly to abhor him; therefore he shall be my servant for ever." This double crime, as it must be regarded if judged by the standard of Christian morality, of exterminating to conceal and lying to deceive, does not seem to have been considered in those times and under that dispensation as any cause of reproach. Yet as David is a type of the spiritual man, and even as the Lord Himself as Divine truth, in what light are we to view these as representative acts? Had David been among his own people, his invasion of those nations would have been regarded as a meritorious act; and the greater the slaughter and the richer the spoil, the more would it have redounded to his honour. But David was now living among the enemies of his people, and he must appear to them to be his people's enemy. Yet this could be only an appearance. David, wherever he might be, as now driven by a cruel necessity to seek shelter in an enemy's territory, could not be unmindful of or unfaithful to the country over which he knew he was destined to rule. Besides, the land in which he now dwelt, by Divine decree belonged to the children of Israel, having been promised to Abraham and Isaac as part of the inheritance of their descendants (Gen. xiii. 15, xxvi. 3). It, however, remained unpossessed in the days of Joshua (Josh. xiii. 3); and the Philistines were among the nations that were left to prove Israel, and to teach them war (Judges iii. 1-3). The Israelites dwelt among the unconquered nations (ver. 5); so that David and his men were not altogether strangers in the land of the Philistines. There was this great difference between them and their brethren. The Israelites who dwelt among the nations took their daughters to be their wives, and gave their daughters to their sons, and served their gods; which brought calamities upon them (vers. 6-9). David and his men were not guilty of these evils. They kept themselves separate from the

Philistines among whom they dwelt ; and instead of making league with their enemies and worshipping their gods, they made their presence in Philistia the opportunity and the means of executing the Divine judgment upon some of the proscribed nations, whom they could not otherwise have subdued. But the Philistines must not know that David employed the security which their hospitality afforded him in using against their neighbours the sword that might soon be turned against themselves ; they must, on the contrary, believe that not their friends but their foes were the objects of his attack. There must be something in the nature of that faith which the Philistines represented which leads them to draw a corresponding conclusion from the doing and teaching of the Divine truth which David represented.

Faith alone, when adopted in principle and followed in practice, not only blunts the mind's perception, but perverts all its views, of the teaching and operation of Divine truth. It calls evil good, and good evil ; it puts darkness for light, and light for darkness ; it puts bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter (Isa. v. 20). According to this principle, Divine truth does not war against evil but against good. This seems a hard saying. But the principle involves it, and if carried out to its legitimate consequences takes that outward shape. It does so in this way.

Those who hold the doctrine of salvation by faith alone, do so on the ground that works are meritorious, and therefore can contribute nothing to salvation ; and when it is believed that good works do not justify, it is not difficult to believe that evil works do not condemn. Few, indeed, in the present day openly avow this as their belief ; but the doctrine includes it, and its tendency is to produce it. Many who believe that faith alone saves are yet exemplary in the fulfilment of the law. Such do not come under the denomination of spiritual Philistines. The spiritual Philistine is one who believes, and who acts on the belief, that good does not justify and that evil does not condemn. We see this tendency in its effects on the intellectual efforts of the theological writers who maintain it. In reading the Scriptures they eagerly seize on everything that is said in favour of faith, and seem as if they were unable to see what is said in favour of charity and good works ; and if any adverse passage demands attention, they feel themselves constrained to evade the force of its teaching. The statement of Paul, that "a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law" (Rom. iii. 28), is taken as the sum of Christian doctrine on the subject ; while James, in declaring that "by works a man is justified, and not by faith only" (ii. 24), is accused of Judaizing ; and it is well known that Luther pronounced the excellent apostolic letter in which the declaration appears to be an epistle of straw. The two assertions, the one of Paul and the other of James, are in perfect harmony when the subject

and object of the two writers are understood. But this way of reading the Scriptures is an exemplification of the faith of Achish, that the road which David made was not against the Geshurites, and the Gezrites, and the Amalekites, but against the south of Judah, and against the south of the Jerahmeelites, and against the south of the Kenites. Achish, indeed, believed this because David told him. David deceived Achish. But can the Lord, or His Word, deceive men? The Scriptures say so. Jeremiah says, "O Lord, Thou hast deceived me, and I was deceived" (xx. 7); the Lord says by Ezekiel, "If the prophet be deceived when he hath spoken a thing, I the Lord have deceived that prophet" (xiv. 9); and the Lord employed a lying spirit to deceive Ahab (1 Kings xxii. 20-23). These are apparent truths. The Lord does not deceive men by the teaching of His Word, but men deceive themselves by giving His Word a false interpretation; saying to the prophets, "Prophecy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophecy deceits" (Isa. xxx. 10). The disposition to be deceived is the ground of all religious deception. The Word of the Lord is truth (John xvii. 17); but men change the truth of God into a lie (Rom. i. 25). What David told Achish was, according to both its natural and its spiritual meaning, the opposite of what he did; the places and peoples have also an opposite signification. Amalek is falsity grounded in interior evil, and the south of Judah is truth grounded in interior goodness. The Gezrites are falsity from reasonings, and the Jerahmeelites are truth from intelligence; and the Geshurites are falsity from science, and the south of the Kenites is truth grounded in natural goodness. Thus the three have reference to celestial, spiritual, and natural truth and their opposites. The destruction of every man and woman, terrible as it must be regarded as an historical fact, was the carrying out of the Divine judgment pronounced against the nations, and was the type of the extinction of every thought and affection opposed to the supremacy of Divine truth and goodness, which constitute the kingdom of God.

"Achish believed David, saying, He hath made his people Israel utterly to abhor him; therefore he shall be my servant for ever." David's people Israel are those who acknowledge the Lord's Divine truth as their master, the Philistines are those who desire to make it their servant. All truth leads to goodness, and all religion has relation to life; and only when we follow its teaching are we its subjects and servants. But if we believe that truth leads us to trust in another's goodness, and that all religion has relation to faith, we subvert the right order of things, and make truth subject and servant to us, because subservient to our own views and aims.

CHAPTER XXI.

SAUL AND THE WITCH OF ENDOR.

I *Samuel* xxviii.

FEW portions of the Old Testament history present more points of curious interest, or more lessons of solemn admonition, than the account of Saul's interview with the witch of Endor.

The nature and extent of the supernatural power which the woman possessed, or was supposed to possess, the reality, appearance, or illusion of her bringing up Samuel, are points which have often been discussed, and on which a variety of opinions have been expressed and still continue to exist.

Apart from critical opinions, the relation itself, in its simple historical aspect, presents, in the character and conduct of Saul, a fearful picture of the condition of a mind desirous to serve God and Mammon. Saul had neglected the Divine command which had been given him to execute, yet in his need he seeks Divine direction; he had contemned the counsel of Samuel while living, but desires to have recourse to him for advice when dead; he had endeavoured to expel the witches out of the land, and now he wishes to avail himself of the unlawful power he had attempted to destroy.

His conduct shows how much the mind may be under the influence of superstition when it has no true regard for religion; and how inconsistently men are liable to act when they have no settled principles of religion to guide them.

In regard to the questions themselves—whether the woman to whom Saul applied had, or only pretended to have, the power of calling up the dead; and, admitting that she had, whether he who came up was Samuel himself, or another who personated the prophet, there is little in mere reasoning that can lead us to a satisfactory conclusion. If we believe the Scriptures we must admit that there is nothing contrary to their testimony in the belief, that the living can have sensible intercourse with the dead. The Word itself affords abundant testimony of the fact. Nor is there anything extremely marvellous in this when it is known, as we now know, that the men who have departed this life are as truly men as when they lived in the body, and that the spiritual world, which is the habitation of souls, is as near to the natural world, which is the habitation of men, and is as intimately connected with it, as the soul is with the body. It is true that men cannot see spirits with their bodily eyes nor hear them with their bodily ears; but there can be no reason to doubt that men may be brought,

even while they live in the natural world, into such a state as enables them to see and hear spirits with the organs of their own spiritual body. There are spiritual as well as natural senses. Human souls and the world they were created to inhabit, are at least as real and substantial as the material body and the material world. And when Divine wisdom sees good to grant or permit it, spiritual objects can be presented to and be cognised by the spiritual senses, without the intervention of the material body. In all the instances recorded in the Scriptures of angels and spirits being seen, and touched, and conversed with by men, not the material but the spiritual senses were affected. Angels did not for the time put on a material body, but men for the time were brought into a spiritual state.

Admitting the possibility of spiritual intercourse, it may indeed appear inconsistent to suppose that the power to produce it should be capable of being exercised by the will of man, especially by that of any one who is acting in contrariety to the laws of Divine order, as we must suppose the witch of Endor to have been doing. On the same principle we might refuse to admit the power of working miracles said to have been exercised by the magicians of Egypt, unless we believe them, as some do, to have been deceptions. In all such cases we may use the words of our Lord to Pilate, when he asked Him if He knew not that he had power to crucify and power to release Him. "Thou couldest have no power at all against Me," said our Lord, "except it were given thee from above." Wherever such power is exercised it is by Divine permission. And God permits such things, not as one who desires them, but as one whose boundless love and everlasting wisdom work in a sphere above the will and wisdom of man, and for an infinite and eternal end; and because evil cannot be prevented without destroying the freedom of the human will, which God Himself has granted, and which He cannot therefore violate. The power itself, absolutely considered, is Divine; and that which is exerted in magical miracles, or in any unlawful spiritual prodigy, is stolen from heaven, but has passed through channels and is applied to purposes which pervert it.

There is nothing, therefore, inconsistent with the testimony of Scripture, nor consequently with the laws of spiritual intercourse, in the woman of Endor being able to bring Saul into open communication with the spiritual world, or with one of its inhabitants. But the question still remains to be determined, whether that one with whom he was brought into communication was the spirit of Samuel, or one who personated the prophet.

In the writings of the New Church, published by Swedenborg himself, there is, rather singularly, nothing relating to the case of the witch of Endor. But in that fragmentary work, already mentioned in

Chapter XVIII., and published since the death of the author, the subject is treated of, so far at least as relates to this point, and to another which is included in the relation.

The author says : " It is well to be observed that Samuel was not raised up from the dead by the witch. That was only a fallacy : it was another. One was raised up who represented Samuel. For when permission is given to evil spirits or their leaders, they can cleverly represent whatever person or character they will, provided that person has been seen and known by the individual, and they can do this with such an amount of skill, that every accent of the voice, every peculiarity, is supplied. Of this I have had experience two or three times by the agency of certain spirits, who set before me people I had known during their lifetime, with whom I held long conversations, and who were like their former selves when in life. Still, however, on all these occasions, I questioned whether they were the same, and expressed my doubts to the spirits. Such power have they to personate whom they will, be he but known to the observer. Nothing could be more manifest to me that it was not Samuel, but an evil spirit who represented him. That it was not Samuel is sufficiently clear, because the woman produced the appearance, and because it is said at ver. 13 that gods ascended."

In regard to the prediction of Israel's defeat and the death of Saul and his sons, these remarks occur : " To evil spirits it is also given to declare things that are future, but this is from the Lord, and it is given through good spirits, to whom it is given in such cases to turn away the speech of the evil spirits. In innumerable instances I have observed evil spirits speak as if they predicted events, etc. No one can know the future but Jehovah God only."

However interesting these particulars may be, and they are all we have of a direct nature to guide us to any satisfactory views of the origin and nature of the spiritual phenomena which this singular history records, the spiritual meaning and practical use of the circumstances are those which chiefly concern us.

Saul may be considered as, in his representative character, presenting us with a view of the state and experience of the natural mind in a state of deep spiritual distress, or of the natural man labouring under the effects of conflicting passions. The Philistines, we learn, had again invaded the land, and Saul had gathered all Israel together to meet them. But the confidence that ensured victory was gone. Saul was afraid, and his heart greatly trembled. One of the leading truths which Israel, and their leaders especially, had been instructed to believe and trust in was, that the Lord could save by many or few. That truth Saul had ceased to regard, so far at least as was requisite for his support in the hour of trial.

No doubt spiritual trials, one of which that of Saul represented, are attended with a feeling of distrust in the all-sufficiency of the providence of God. Whenever this is the case, it arises from a deficiency of our faith and love. It is love and faith that inspire confidence ; for the Lord supports us through the principles derived from himself that are within us. He cannot dwell in anything in us but that which is His own ; and just in proportion as we have formed our inner life by the principles of His kingdom, which are love and truth, is He able to inspire our hearts with trust in Him, and to dissipate our unworthy fears. This fear, and the distrust from which it springs, may not be felt in the ordinary circumstances of life, although they may be secretly exercising an influence over us, which a strict spiritual analysis of our thoughts and feelings, words and actions, might enable us to discover. It is when some unusual demand is made upon us that we become truly sensible of their existence. When some of our spiritual enemies come against us, we are liable to fear lest we be overcome. And when we reflect that these enemies are those of our own hearts, we can easily see the ground of our apprehensions. So long as these evils of the heart, or falsities of the understanding, find nothing to call them forth into sensible activity, the mind may be calm and the life happy. It is when something out of the ordinary course of experience excites them into action that the time of trial comes, and fear and trembling arise. But the Divine purpose in these permissions is to make us sensible of our real state, and effect some improvement in it. For our real state, essentially considered, is not what it seems in ordinary circumstances to be, but what it is in extraordinary conditions and great emergencies.

In all states of trouble or uncertainty the people of God have in Him a source of unfailing comfort and of unerring counsel. When about to engage in any great undertaking, especially when about to enter into the conflict of battle, the leaders of Israel asked counsel of the Lord. It depended on whether they or the people were at the time lying under the guilt of unexpiated sin, that they received or did not receive an answer. In the 14th chapter of this book we find that an answer was withheld because Jonathan had tasted a little honey, though he was at the time unaware of the command that his father had issued, to taste no food till Israel had avenged themselves on their enemies. And this teaches that all evil, whenever it is brought into act, even although it be a sin of ignorance, intercepts the Divine influence. However wide the difference may be between unintentional and intentional evil, the one has an injurious effect as well as the other, though very different in degree. The reason of this is obvious. Outward evil comes forth from the inward evil of our hereditary nature ; and it comes forth spontaneously, even before the

nature of evil is known. As formerly remarked, in speaking of Jonathan's error, evil that repeatedly comes forth into act becomes a habit of the life ; and an evil habit strengthens the inclination which produces it. Hence the importance of forming virtuous and orderly habits as well as acquiring right principles ; and this should be especially attended to in the education of the young. It is because actual evil, or evil in act, even when committed unintentionally, has an injurious effect on him who commits it, that under the Jewish dispensation sacrifices were instituted and were required to be offered for sins of ignorance as well as for sins of intention ; for by this was represented that actual evil, however venial, must be removed by practical repentance before there can be communion with God. If even the sin of Jonathan prevented the reception of an answer from heaven, how much more that of Saul ; how much more sins of purpose than sins of error.

Saul in his distress, in beholding the army of the Philistines, inquired of the Lord ; but the Lord answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by vision, nor by prophets. These were all mediums through which communication from God was given. That which was given in sleep through dreams was that which flowed into the mind from the Spirit of the Lord, that which was given by vision was that which came through the truths of the Word, and that which was given by prophets was that which was derived from doctrinal teaching. In the case of Saul, these were withheld from him in accordance with a law of the representative Church to which he belonged ; but as a matter of spiritual experience, these channels of spiritual communication are closed against us by sin against God. "Your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid His face from you, that He will not hear" (Isa. lix. 2). "When ye spread forth your hands, I will hide Mine eyes from you : yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear : your hands are full of blood" (Isa. i. 15). How dreadful the state when all light and comfort from heaven is shut out, and when the outward means of direction give no counsel ! When these fail, what is to be done ? The legitimate course is pointed out by that very Word which seems to refuse, and perhaps does refuse, to give the answer required—for the Lord and His Word refuse to give a response when the inquiry or the inquirer is wrong. That Word says, "Put away the evil of your doings from before Mine eyes ; cease to do evil ; learn to do well. Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord : though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow ; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool" (i. 16, 18). When we fail to receive what we desire and ask for, we should know that the cause is in ourselves ; and reason itself may teach us, that it is our wisdom and duty to remove it by con-

fession, supplication, repentance, and well-doing. But how liable are we to look out of ourselves for the obstacles to the attainment of even our wisest and best wishes, and for the means of acquiring what we desire ! And the same false mode of judging may lead us to commit a still greater evil. It may lead us to seek, by forbidden means and through an impure channel, what we shut out from ourselves by neglecting the orderly means and avenues of Divine appointment.

Saul, instead of humbling himself before God in the dust of sincere contrition, sought what he wished through a medium which the Divine law and his own act had condemned. The Divine law declared, "There shall not be found among you any one that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch, or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer ; for all that do these things are an abomination unto the Lord. Thou shalt be perfect with the Lord thy God." Whether in obedience to the law, or to gratify a disposition of his own, Saul had put away those that had familiar spirits and the wizards out of the land. And yet to one of these he now has recourse. In this we sometimes imitate Saul. We lean in our hearts to what we condemn in our judgment, and do ourselves what we blame others for doing. One of the great lessons we have to learn is, to be faithful to our own souls, for this is involved in being faithful to God. It is our duty to be perfect or sincere with the Lord our God, and to approach Him as the Fountain of all goodness, the living God and the Author of all life, and to seek His face through His Word and the doctrines of His truth, and by doing His will. "And when they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep, and that mutter : should not a people seek unto their God ? for the living to the dead ? To the law and to the testimony : if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them."

In the spiritual sense, those illegitimate channels of supernatural knowledge represented the persuasions of truth and goodness by which the evil heart seeks to attain its own selfish and worldly objects. Those workers against the Divine will, which all necromancers were, represented the various means originating in the corrupt selfhood of man, by which he endeavours to do for himself what it is in the power and the province of God only to do. No doubt these means and efforts are, as far as possible, overruled for good. Such was the case with Balaam, when employed by Balak to curse Israel. He was constrained altogether to bless them. Yet he was a soothsayer, and an enemy to the people of Israel ; and was slain among the Midianites when fighting against them (Num. xxxi. 8). Such also was the case in the present instance. Saul forced himself into the circle of the forbidden power, but received an answer very different from that which

he desired. Even through that impure channel the heavy tidings came to him that the Lord would deliver Israel into the hand of the Philistines, and that he and his two sons should fall in the battle.

This, no doubt, in reference to individuals such as Saul was, represents a fall in temptation, and the extinction of the life of truth, with its affections and thoughts. Considered as referring to those who are progressing in the spiritual life, the death of what remains of the old man is represented, by which death the new man, represented by David, truly lives, and is exalted and invested with new power. To these general views and the reflections which they suggest a few remarks of a more particular kind may be added.

The witches of Scripture, understood in its spiritual sense, are those who conjoin the falsities of the evil of self-love to the truths of faith; so that witchcraft involves the sin of profanation. When Saul forsook the Divine oracles to consult the witch of Endor, and turned from faith in the living God to faith in a necromancer—an oracle of the dead—he mixed the sacred with the profane, and brought ruin upon himself.

The witch whom Saul consulted was not to know who he was; so he disguised himself, and put on other raiment, and went, and two men with him, and they came to the woman by night. How forcibly does this represent the state and doings of those who turn aside from the holy to the profane! They disguise themselves, they change the garments of truth for the raiment of falsity, and with the consent of the will and the understanding, they leave the light of day for the darkness of night, to inquire of the familiar spirit of the “imagination of the thoughts of his heart, which is only evil continually,” respecting that which should be asked of God, and which he never refuses to grant if asked in faith. But however determined such a one may be to obtain what he desires through an unhallowed medium, the thought will arise, that he is doing what he himself had once condemned as sinful, and tried to suppress; as the witch reminds her secret visitor of what Saul had done, how he had cut off those that have familiar spirits, and the wizards, out of the land. When, however, the mind is greatly inclined to do wrong, seldom do such thoughts turn it away from its purpose. It is easily assured that nothing evil shall happen to it for this thing. But when its desire is gratified, what is the result? When, in obedience to the command of the king, the woman brought up Samuel, she cried with a loud voice, and she said, “Why hast thou deceived me? for thou art Saul.” Why should the apparition have alarmed her or convinced her of her visitor being Saul? It is difficult to imagine. But is there not a spiritual reason? Samuel the prophet represented the Word and the truth it teaches, and the truth of the Word reveals the best concealed secrets of the human heart. “Elisha, the prophet that is in Israel, telleth the king of Israel the words that

thou speakest in thy bedchamber" (2 Kings vi. 12). But those fears are allayed. The mind is bent on its object. Saul asks what the woman has seen. It appears from this that Saul had not yet seen the apparition himself. This is quite consistent with the fact that a spirit cannot be seen by the natural eye, and that the opening of the spiritual sight is an act of Divine power, so that of several different persons one may see spiritual objects and the others not. When the Lord is pleased to unveil the eyes of the soul, the present spirit comes into view. It would appear that it was some time before Saul received this open vision. For he asked the woman, What form is he of? When the woman said, "An old man cometh up, and he is covered with a mantle; Saul perceived that it was Samuel; and he stooped with his face to the ground, and bowed himself." Samuel now demanded of Saul why he had disquieted him to bring him up. When Saul told the spirit of the prophet of his distress, and of the Lord having departed from him, and of His answering him no more, neither by prophets nor by dreams, so that he had come to ask Samuel what he should do, he received the answer, "Wherefore then dost thou ask of me, seeing the Lord is departed from thee, and is become thine enemy?" How can truth aid him from whom good has departed? Good departs only from those who have departed from goodness, and when this is the case, truth is only heard giving utterance to judgment. And the judgment of truth alone is judgment without mercy; for he who in his own acts has removed mercy from judgment, shall be judged without mercy. That by which we judge is that by which we are judged. "Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again." Saul has to listen to the judgment of that truth which he himself had robbed of its goodness. It reminds him that by disobedience he had forfeited the kingdom, which had been given to another, and tells him of the disastrous issue of the impending battle: "To-morrow shalt thou and thy sons be with me: the Lord also shall deliver the host of Israel into the hand of the Philistines."

No wonder that on hearing this dread intelligence "Saul fell straightway all along on the earth, and was sore afraid, because of the words of Samuel: and there was no strength in him; for he had eaten no bread all the day, nor all the night." This does not seem to have been the voluntary prostration of penitence, but the involuntary prostration of despair. There was, besides, no strength in him. He had fasted, but not, it is to be feared, in the way the Lord has chosen—"to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke" (Isa. lviii. 6). The woman now came to Saul and urged him to take a morsel of bread. He refused; but "his servants, together

with the woman, compelled him ; and he hearkened unto their voice. So he arose from the earth, and sat upon the bed." This was not the bed of true doctrine. It was that of the pythoness. And so must we regard the fatted calf that she prepared for him, not as holy, but as abominable flesh (Hag. ii. 12 ; Ezek. iv. 14) ; sacrificed not to God, but to demons. The witch herself, in doing this act of kindness to Saul, need not be regarded in an unfavourable light. The king's sad state called forth her better feelings. The wizard was, for the time at least, lost in the woman. As forming part of a history that is representative, her act has a different character, and is recorded to teach us a different lesson. When we give ourselves up to the evil agencies we employ, we must come to the condition of being compelled to draw our strength from the means that they supply.

How solemn is the lesson we may learn from this part of the history of Saul ! When the heart is turned away from God, the mind is bereft of all true comfort and deprived of all right direction. This is most felt and exhibited in times of danger and perplexity. It should, therefore, while the evil day is yet future, be our endeavour faithfully to obey the voice of the Lord, relying on His providential care, and the day of trial and conflict, come when it may, will find us prepared for the demands that may be made on our power of action or endurance.

CHAPTER XXII.

PREPARATION FOR BATTLE. THE AMALEKITES SPOIL ZIKLAG. DAVID RECOVERS ALL.

1 *Samuel* xxix, xxx.

THE cloud that has hung over Saul, and darkened his mind and his prospects, now rapidly becomes more dense and threatening. The Philistines, who had been collecting their forces in Shunem, now gather together all their armies in Aphek ; and the Israelites pitch by a fountain which is in Jezreel. Had Saul been wise enough to retain David in his service, he would have had a tower of strength in him whom his enemies feared and his subjects loved ; and we can hardly suppose that the king did not now secretly lament the folly, at least, of his own suicidal conduct. But he had not only deprived himself of David's powerful assistance, he had thrown him into the arms of the very enemy who had made war against him, the dread of whose hosts had driven him, when heaven was shut against him, to knock at the gate of Sheol, and ask counsel of the dead.

The Philistine armies set out on their march to Jezreel, where the

Israelites were encamped ; " and the lords of the Philistines passed on by hundreds, and by thousands : but David and his men passed on in the rereward with Achish." David would thus appear to have joined his forces to those of the enemy, to war against his country. Whether he would have fought in the enemy's ranks cannot perhaps be determined. The trial was prevented by the Philistines themselves ; and it is not improbable that, had he actually engaged in the conflict, the result would have verified the suspicion of the Philistine nobles, which they urged upon Achish, as the ground of their demand that David should return to Ziklag, " lest in the battle he be an adversary to us : for wherewith should he reconcile himself unto his master? should it not be with the heads of these men?" And that they believed he would be a formidable adversary is evident from their repeating the triumphal song of the women, when David was returning from the slaughter of Goliath, " Saul slew his thousands, and David his ten thousands." David must either have been in bitter earnest or have cleverly dissembled ; for when Achish, reluctantly yielding to the remonstrance of his nobles, urged David's return, " David said unto Achish, But what have I done? and what hast thou found in thy servant so long as I have been with thee unto this day, that I may not go fight against the enemies of my lord the king?" The king's confidence in David seems to have remained unshaken. " I know," he says, " that thou art good in my sight, as an angel of God : notwithstanding the princes of the Philistines have said, He shall not go up with us to the battle. Wherefore now rise up early in the morning with thy master's servants that are come with thee : and as soon as ye be up early in the morning, and have light, depart. So David and his men rose up early to depart in the morning, to return into the land of the Philistines. And the Philistines went up to Jezreel." David's answer is consistent with either supposition. But there is no reason to believe that he who so completely deceived Achish on a former occasion would of necessity be faithful to him now.

These personal considerations are interesting to us chiefly for the lessons we may derive from them, not merely by moral reflection, but by spiritual interpretation. If David is a type of the spiritual man, and even of the Lord Himself as Divine truth, that must hold good in this instance, as well as in others in which he manifests true nobleness of character ; always understanding that the acts of representative men do but show forth tenderness in those they represent. There are, besides, different aspects and appearances of character, answering to the states of those towards whom representative men act. The Lord appears to every man according to his state. " With the pure Thou wilt show Thyself pure ; and with the froward Thou wilt show Thyself froward " (Ps. xviii. 26). These words were uttered by the Psalmist

in reference to the circumstances of the present history. "David spake unto the Lord the words of this song in the day that the Lord delivered him from the hand of all his enemies, and from the hand of Saul." The psalm, in its inmost sense, is prophetic of the Lord, whose experience was typified by that of David. So must the history be.

We have seen that David's raid against the Amalekites was represented to Achish as having been an attack upon Judah; and that this false representation symbolized the false conception which those who are in the doctrine of faith alone form of the teaching of Divine truth, that it is hostile to what they call self-righteousness, but not to what is rightly called self-love. David's position now is different in one respect from what it was then. On that occasion he was believed to have fought of his own accord and with his own men against Israel; on this occasion he is to fight, not only against Israel, but with Philistia. The cases are different. The weakening of an enemy or an opponent may strengthen our own position, but only when it is done by ourselves, or by others in concert with us. One may be a foe to our enemy, and yet not a friend to us. David might have been supposed desirous to inflict injury on his own people, and yet be unwilling to assist another nation to conquer them. The lords of the Philistines were not only of this opinion, but believed he intended to turn against them in the day of battle. Achish seems to have still regarded David as his friend, and as honestly disposed to fight with him against his enemies, and thus against Saul, who was the enemy of David. The circumstances here recorded respecting David and the lords of the Philistines again remind us of those related of Abraham and Isaac with respect to the Philistines among whom they dwelt. We have seen that these patriarchs deceived king Abimelech, by each representing that his wife was his sister. Yet we know that this has a high and holy signification, which is this, that rational truth is permitted to those who are not capable of receiving Divine truth. Rational truth is related to good as a sister to a brother; Divine truth is related to good as a wife to a husband.

But the circumstance now related of David resembles that which happened to Abraham and Isaac when the Philistines discovered that Sarah and Rebecca were the wives of Abraham and Isaac. They were dismissed; and in the case of Isaac, at least, for a reason similar to that which led the lords of the Philistines to demand the dismissal of David. "Abimelech said unto Isaac, Go from us; for thou art much mightier than we" (Gen. xxvi. 16). In the case of the patriarchs there was the discovery, in David's case there was only the suspicion, of deceit; but that suspicion amounted to and had the effect of certainty. When, in intellectual warfare, men suspect or believe that

a truth on which they have relied for support is likely, not only to fail them but to turn against them in the hour of conflict, if they are wise in their generation they will reject it. In dialectics a bad argument turns against him who employs it. In religious polemics men are driven, in extreme cases, to deny the genuineness of a text, or the authenticity of a history, if they certainly know or strongly suspect it will prove false to their cause. Those who believe in the mere humanity of Jesus deny the genuineness of that part of the New Testament which gives an account of His miraculous conception. Some deny the genuineness of the Lord's miracles, some the fact of His resurrection. But it is characteristic of those whom the Philistines, even in their best state, represented, that they receive not the real but the apparent truths of the Word. They must see God, if not altogether such an one as themselves, yet as having some considerable resemblance to them in character. Indeed many of the false ideas men form of the Divine character, and of His dealings with His creatures, are to a great extent a reflection of their own character and of their dealings with each other.

When David and his men returned to Ziklag on the third day they found that "the Amalekites had invaded the south, and Ziklag, and smitten Ziklag, and burned it with fire; and had taken the women captives, that were therein: they slew not any, either great or small, but carried them away, and went on their way." Here was a calamity that David had brought upon himself and all his company, by following the Philistine army. It represents one of those trials that come upon us when our attention and our energies are turned to some new enterprise, and we leave some important interest unprotected. The Amalekites, true to their character, had invaded the south and attacked Ziklag, when they knew that their defenders were gone, and they could make an easy conquest. Falsity grounded in interior evil is ready to rush in when truth grounded in interior goodness recedes from the light, as David departed from the south when he went to join Achish and when he followed the Philistine army. And, indeed, the condition of the mind, when truth comes down from the perceptive to the reasoning faculty, is favourable to the insinuation of those false suggestions that try our inward faith, which is that of the heart rather than that of the understanding; and which, for the time, deprives the perceptions of truth of the affections of goodness, as the Amalekites made captives the wives and sons and daughters of David and his men. When the affections are held captive, which they are in temptation, which is spiritual captivity, all the delight of life is taken away; as "David and the people that were with him lifted up their voice and wept, until they had no more power to weep." But "David was greatly distressed; for the people spake of stoning him, because the

soul of all the people was grieved, every man for his sons and for his daughters." The people in the wilderness threatened to stone Moses, when they thirsted, and there was no water for them to drink (Exod. xvii. 4). In states of severe trial the mind, in bitterness of spirit, is brought, in extreme cases, to the verge of desperation, in which it is tempted to extinguish in itself all the truth of faith and all faith in the truth. This is the threat of the people to stone Moses, and also that of the people to stone David. This threatened violence led David, as it had led Moses, to seek strength where only it can be found. "David encouraged himself in the Lord his God." Truth draws its strength from love; and the true effect, as it is the real purpose of trial, is to strengthen the bond of union between truth and love, first in the inner, next in the outer man.

But the inner man seeks the direction of wisdom as well as the strength of love. David called on Ahimelech the priest to bring the ephod; "and he inquired at the Lord, saying, Shall I pursue after this troop? shall I overtake them? And He answered him, Pursue: for thou shalt surely overtake them, and without fail recover all." This Divine answer inspired David's despairing followers with hope. "So David went, he and the six hundred men that were with him, and came to the brook Besor, where those that were left behind stayed. But David pursued, he and four hundred men: for two hundred abode behind, which were so faint that they could not go over the brook Besor." It would be straining resemblances to compare David's expedition to that of Gideon against the Midianites, and Amalekites, and children of the east, recorded in Judges (vii.); but there are two particulars that have some similarity to it. It may be reasonably supposed that six hundred men were not too many to attack a host that had invaded the south and Ziklag, and had taken great spoil out of the land of the Philistines, and out of the land of Judah; yet the number is reduced to four hundred. Two hundred remained behind, indeed, because they were so faint that they were not able to pass over the brook; but the four hundred were no doubt more suitable for the work than the six hundred. The number four, like two, is expressive of the conjunction of goodness and truth; and the purpose of the present expedition, spiritually interpreted, is to restore that conjunction. For the Amalekites had carried away the wives of David and his men; thus representing the severance of the spiritual marriage, which it was the chief purpose of David and his men representatively to restore. It is not said, as it was of Gideon's army, that David's men were too many, or that the number was ultimately reduced by the manner in which the men drank of the water. David's men were faint, not, like some of Gideon's men, faint-hearted; they were weary, no doubt with their previous toil; they were willing but not able;

their progress was arrested by the brook, which they were not able to pass over. Brooks and rivers are emblematical of truth ; but passing through them is a symbol of passing through trial and temptation. This was represented by the Israelites passing through the Jordan. And the Lord promises to the redeemed, "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee ; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee" (Isa. xliii. 2). Those of David's men who had not sufficient strength to cross the brook, were those who had goodness, but not truth corresponding to it, and were unable to pass through the trial that was before them. Goodness alone and truth alone are equally powerless. Truth has all its power from goodness, and goodness ever uses all its power by truth. Yet those who have goodness without truth, though unable, in that state, to pass through some of the trials and engage in some of the conflicts of the spiritual life, are privileged to share in the spoil which others acquire ; which we shall see exemplified in the case of David's men and others, who went not with him against the Amalekites.

When the Israelites were in pursuit of the enemy, "they found an Egyptian in the field, and brought him to David." Servant to an Amalekite, his master had left him when he fell sick, and he had eaten and drunk nothing for three days and nights. When he received nourishment, his spirit came again ; and, besides telling where the Amalekites had been, he engaged to conduct David to where they now were. Science, which serves the evil, can also serve the good. Knowledge is an instrument that can be employed in the service both of error and of truth. Without knowledge there can be neither truth nor error ; for that of which nothing is known can neither be affirmed nor denied. Knowledges are of facts ; truth or error is the conclusion we draw from them, or the principle they serve to confirm. Science helps the believer to confirm the truths of revealed religion, and the unbeliever to deny them. Science is a receptacle that may be filled with what is true and good or with what is false and evil, as the young Egyptian could be nourished either by an Amalekite or by an Israelite. It may also be sickly or healthy, and may be abandoned by a master whom it is no longer able to serve. Science becomes sick to the evil when they become weary of science, which they do when, having served its end, they despise and reject it as a means. When men become openly wicked, they no longer try to make others believe they are righteous. When a scientific is emptied of falsity and evil, and is filled with goodness and truth, spiritual and natural, as the Egyptian after three days' fasting, was fed with bread and water, figs and raisins ; and is devoted to the service of truth, and thus secured against destruction and profanation, as David swore by God to the young man that he would neither kill him nor deliver him to his master ; then

may it become instrumental in guiding the mind to the discovery of the falsity of evil which it desires to overtake and overcome.

Led by the Egyptian, David came upon the Amalekites, who "were spread abroad upon all the earth, eating and drinking, and dancing, because of all the great spoil that they had taken out of the land of the Philistines, and out of the land of Judah." The whole natural mind given up to sensual pleasure, and the higher faculties spoiled of their possessions to feast and gratify the lower appetites, the camp of Amalek presents a true image of the carnal mind and of the carnal man. But like the natural man when he abandons himself to sensual enjoyment, the Amalekites had thought themselves secure and had neglected to watch, and at an hour that they thought not the judgment of truth had come upon them. Like all judgment, this came upon the Amalekites in the night; for "David smote them from the twilight even unto the evening of the next day: and there escaped not a man of them, save four hundred young men, which rode upon camels, and fled." The twilight is the dawn of a new state, when spiritual light is let in upon the mind, to reveal its character, and bring it under the operation of the Divine truth that judges, the completeness of the judgment being indicated by the continuance of the slaughter, from the twilight of one day to the evening of another. The four hundred young men that escaped may give us some idea of the entire number of the host. But the singular circumstance of these alone escaping, and their fleeing upon camels, has a meaning more than historical. The four hundred young men of the Amalekites are those who are not confirmed in the principles which Amalek represented, but have some general knowledge of, and some affection for, what is good and true, their knowledges being symbolized by the camels. It is a no less singular circumstance that the Divine promise that David would recover all should be so literally fulfilled: for "David recovered all that the Amalekites had carried away: and David rescued his two wives. And there was nothing lacking to them, neither small nor great, neither sons nor daughters, neither spoil, nor any thing that they had taken to them: David recovered all." This, both in fact and meaning, is like the complete recovery by Abram of all that the rebel kings had carried away. "And he brought back all the goods, and also brought again his brother Lot, and his goods, and the women also, and the people" (Gen. xiv. 16). In Abram's case, too, the Amalekites were concerned: for Chedorlaomer and his confederate kings smote, besides others, all the country of the Amalekites. Complete liberation from the dominion, or attempted dominion, of the natural man over the spiritual, was represented by David's, as by Abram's recovery of all that had been carried away, both captives and spoil.

On his return with the spoils of victory, consisting, besides what he

recovered, of all the flocks and herds of his enemies, David met the two hundred men who had been left behind. Those who had gone with him objected to these receiving any part of the spoil, except every man his wife and children. But David decided that they should not do so with that which the Lord had given into their hand, but "as his part is that goeth down to the battle, so shall his part be that tarrieth by the stuff: they shall part alike. And it was so from that day forward, that he made it a statute and an ordinance for Israel unto this day." We have seen that the men who stayed behind, being too weary to pass through the brook, represented those who, though principled in good, are not yet possessed of truth sufficient to enable them to engage, with a reasonable prospect of success, in the active conflicts of the spiritual life. Truth, we have also seen, has no power but from good, and good has no power but by truth. There is no direct conflict between good and evil. Good fights by truth, evil by falsity. And as every evil defends itself by its own particular falsity, so does every good defend itself by its own particular truth. He only is able to fight against an evil who has the truth as well as the good that is opposed to it. But he that goeth not down to the battle can tarry by the stuff. This "stuff" was no doubt the baggage, the impedimenta, of David's little army. But we have seen, in speaking of the stuff among which Saul hid himself (x. 22), that it literally means vessels. And vessels, we have also seen, signify scientifics or knowledges, which are not truths, but the vessels that receive and contain them. Truths that we know are knowledges; knowledges that we understand are truths. Knowledge comes before understanding. We must know a truth before we can understand it, and we must understand a truth before we can rightly use it. Those only who understand a truth can enter into conflict with its opposite falsity. But those who only know a truth, though they cannot fight, can guard and keep that which supplies others, and which some day will supply themselves, with the means of vindicating truth against falsity, and thus good against evil. And the ordinance for spiritual Israel is, that all who are actuated by the same good end, and combine their efforts, though in different ways, to attain it, shall share alike in the spoil with the more active, who directly acquire it. A wife who tarries by the stuff at home shares alike with her husband in the spoil he acquires by his more active duties in the world. So those who perform more of the woman's part in the business of the spiritual life, by watching while others toil, share equally with them in the results. In the Church of God there is diversity of gifts but the same Spirit; and all who are influenced by the same spirit of love, whatever their several gifts may be, share alike in the benefits of a general acquisition.

BOOK II.

THE REIGN OF DAVID.

In the "Adversaria" this equal division of the spoil is said to teach the same truth as the parable of the labourers in the vineyard ; those who wrought one hour being made equal to those who had borne the burden and heat of the day. In the Writings themselves the different hours at which the labourers were hired are explained to mean different states of life. Those hired at the third, the sixth, and the ninth hour signify those who are in states of truth ; and those hired at the eleventh hour signify those who are in a state of good though not yet of truth, but who are in a receptive state, such as well-disposed young people, whose faculty of understanding is not yet matured. These last are they who tarry by the stuff. They know but do not yet understand the truth, and therefore do not go down to the battle.

Besides giving equal shares to his men, when he came to Ziklag David sent a present—a blessing—of the spoil of the enemies of the Lord to the elders of various cities, chiefly in Judah, and to all the places where David and his men were wont to haunt. It is said of Him whom David represented, that He spoiled principalities and powers (Col. ii. 15) ; and that He shall divide the spoil with the strong (Isa. liii. 12). Wherever the Redeemer has been received in His humiliation, there will His blessing descend in His exaltation. In the spoil He acquired by His victory over the powers of darkness and the glorification of His humanity, all the faithful share. This is emphatically "David's spoil." In delivering those whom the Amalekites had made captive, David representatively performed that Divine deliverance which he himself prophetically celebrated. "Thou hast ascended on high, Thou hast led captivity captive : Thou hast received gifts for men ; yea, for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them" (Ps. lxxviii. 18).

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE DEFEAT OF ISRAEL AND THE DEATH OF SAUL.

1 *Samuel* xxxi.

THE sacred writer, as the historian of the kingdom of Israel, gives a prominent place to whatever relates to its rulers and people, and only introduces the nations around them, as their history is connected with the main subject of his narrative. The kingdom of God, or the government of the Divine love and wisdom in the minds and affairs of men, is the grand theme of the inspired record ; other principles and forces being introduced only as they aid or hinder its prosperity. As it is in the Word, so should it be in us. The Lord's kingdom should be the primary object of our attention and esteem, and all other things

regarded only as they affect its stability and progress. With two short statements, that the Philistines and the Israelites had gathered their armies together for war, we have two long narratives, one of Saul with the witch of Endor, and the other of David with Achish and against Amalek. After these brief statements of preparation for war, we read, "Now the Philistines fought against Israel: and the men of Israel fled from before the Philistines, and fell down slain in mount Gilboa." Brief but pregnant announcement! War and defeat recorded in one short sentence. Yet this was no ordinary conflict either in itself or in its consequences. It did not, indeed, involve the fate of the kingdom of Israel, but it decided the fate of its first king. It disclosed, at the same time, the state and condition both of the king and the people in their relation to the Lord. The war itself might be no cause of reproach to Israel, but defeat was a sign of their moral degradation. No numerical inferiority could have made it necessary for the men of Israel to flee before the Philistines. If Saul had trusted in the strength of Israel, no power of the enemy could have overcome him. But he had sought unto them that have familiar spirits; and now he saw the result of his moral weakness and practical infidelity. So is it when men substitute superstition for religion, or seek "for the living to the dead." When they have no living faith in God, they are punished by those who are in dead faith. Unfaithful Israel flee before the faithful Philistines. "Evil shall slay the wicked." But evil and unfaithfulness may seem only to be in Saul. Why should the people suffer on account of his sin? Children suffer for the sins of their parents, subjects for the errors of their rulers, soldiers for the incompetence of their generals. Yet the Israelitish people themselves were not blameless. They participated in Saul's persecution of David, whom they must have known as a national benefactor, and whose powerful aid some of them had received in their utmost need. The men of Keilah, whom he had so valiantly aided, were willing to betray him into the hand of Saul; and the Zephites both counselled and guided Saul in his pursuit of David. As they had joined Saul in his crime, they not unnaturally or unjustly shared in his punishment. But besides the operation of natural and moral law, there was, in the case of Israel, the operation of a spiritual law, by which the principal and the instrumental act and suffer together. This is the law which governs our mental and spiritual life. When we err in first principles, every subsequent step leads us farther away from the right path, and from the true goal. When our ends are evil, our means are deceits, and our actions sins. The ruling love enters into all the lower affections, and gives them a character and determination agreeable to its own nature; it even overrules those whose character is inherently different from its own.

In accordance with this principle the main object of the history is to tell us of the fate of Saul. When the men of Israel fled before the Philistines, their pursuers aimed at something besides and higher than merely beating down the panic-stricken army. "The Philistines followed hard upon Saul and upon his sons; and the Philistines slew Jonathan, and Abinadab, and Melchi-shua, Saul's sons. And the battle went sore against Saul, and the archers hit him; and he was sore wounded of the archers. Then said Saul unto his armour-bearer, Draw thy sword, and thrust me through therewith; lest these uncircumcised come and thrust me through, and abuse me. But his armour-bearer would not; for he was sore afraid. Therefore Saul took a sword, and fell upon it. And when his armour-bearer saw that Saul was dead, he fell likewise upon his sword, and died with him. So Saul died, and his three sons, and his armour-bearer, and all his men, that same day together." No catastrophe so great as this had ever happened to Israel, no ruin of theirs was ever so complete. The nearest approach to it, and one which much resembles it, was that in which the ark of God was taken, and the two sons of Eli were slain, and Eli himself was killed by falling from his seat on receiving the news. But on that occasion the army, though defeated, was not annihilated. The two cases present other parallels. The sin of Eli was the cause of the one catastrophe, as the sin of Saul was of the other. And in each case a successor was divinely appointed in the lifetime of the legitimate but unworthy ruler, and was partly nurtured by the ruler himself. Samuel was to Eli what David was to Saul. Both circumstances teach the same general lesson, differing only as the representative character of the judge differs from that of the king.

In considering the subject for the purpose of learning its spiritual meaning and practical lessons, we need not dwell at any length on this catastrophe in relation to Saul himself. There may be something to admire in the desperate courage of the king, in engaging in this, which he no doubt believed would be his last and fatal conflict with the enemies of his God, his people, and himself. And this is all that can be said in favour of the king in this encounter with the Philistines. Saul was not wanting in courage, but in fidelity. To be faithful is more difficult, as it is more important, than to be courageous. Self-love or self-interest is sufficient to inspire courage where it does not naturally exist; fidelity often requires the surrender of both. Faithfulness to our duties and obligations sometimes demands the denial of even our best natural affections. Saul, in the early part of his reign at least, when he still was little in his own sight, showed himself capable of noble actions; and even in sparing Agag he may have been actuated by a generous impulse, but it was against the voice of God and reason. In his conduct towards David he manifested the character of the natural man,

whose favour and dislike are not grounded in principle but in caprice, and whose tenderness and security are measured to others, not according to what they are in themselves, but according to what they are in relation to him. "If ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans so?" Judged by the standard of religious morality, his conduct during the later part of his reign indicates a character almost diabolical. The nature of self-love, as the parent of all cruel and degrading passions, is fearfully exhibited in his conduct towards David; and his character is rendered more odious by its contrast with David's conduct towards him, of which we know not a nobler instance of patient endurance and magnanimous forbearance and forgiveness. But Saul, as we have formerly hinted, is not to be judged by the ordinary standard. We cannot regard him as of a perfectly sound mind. He was the subject of spiritual possession, not perhaps always, but during much of his official career. Yet under this view, his conduct affords us a most impressive lesson. It exhibits, more perfectly than could otherwise have been done, the intrinsic character of the natural man, and of the natural mind in every man. In Saul's experience, too, we see the misery and wretchedness which sin brings with it. And in his end we behold the consequence of forsaking God, and seeking what our diseased imagination desires to know by personal intercourse with departed spirits.

But while it is profitable for us to reflect on Saul's personal conduct, it is far more agreeable and still more useful to consider his representative character, in the present case in reference to the last conflict and the closing scene of his life.

Nay, it shows what was the quality of the natural mind which the Lord in His marvellous condescension assumed from His fallen mother. Saul's character thus holds up to us a mirror in which we may see our own reflected, supposing we were to become subject to the same spiritual influence.

In considering the spiritual lesson which these events and circumstances teach, it is the representative character of the man and his doings that we are chiefly, and in some respects exclusively, to regard. The function itself with which he was invested was holy, and representatively Divine and spiritual. The function is adjoined to the person, but is not identified with him. Saul could, therefore, as the Lord's anointed, represent the regenerate man, and even the Lord in the flesh, and yet have nothing in his personal character answering to either. David clearly made this distinction in regard to him. As his persecutor, David held him guilty of sin; as the Lord's anointed, he held his person sacred. The Philistines and others who opposed Saul fought against him, and he fought against them, not in his private but in his official character, as the king whose kingdom they

wished to subdue, and which he wished to defend. Their wars, therefore, represented spiritual wars, wars for and against the Lord and His kingdom. Yet the spiritual wars which those waged against the king of Israel represented are not to be understood as waged against the Lord personally. Personal warfare could only be carried on against Him once. Only when manifested in the flesh could the Lord be assaulted in person ; and even then chiefly by the enemies of Himself and His kingdom, the spirits of darkness, called the devil and Satan. In all these conflicts the Lord was conqueror. How then could any of His conflicts be represented by those in which, like this last battle of Saul with the Philistines, Israel was defeated and Saul himself was slain, or slew himself? In temptation - conflicts there always is an appearance of defeat on the part of those who conquer. Our Lord's last and severest temptation, the passion of the Cross, presented this appearance. His death seemed to the spirits of darkness as the triumph of their power : they had overcome Him at last. But when on the resurrection morning He burst the bands of death, and rose in a glorified humanity having all power, their seeming victory was turned into overwhelming defeat, and they themselves were thrust down, to be held in everlasting subjection. Although visible in this one instance, all temptations have the same appearance and the same reality. The extremity of every temptation is attended with despair. And what is despair to the tempted, is triumph and seeming victory to the tempter. Every temptation is also attended by a death and a resurrection. Something of the old man dies, and something of the new man lives. The death of the old man is effected by evil spirits, and this is their seeming victory ; and the resurrection of the new man is effected by angels, or by the Lord through angels, and this is their actual defeat. Evil spirits are thus the permitted agents of effecting the death of the old man, both generally as to his ruling love, and particularly as to his affections and lusts ; they are also the dead that bury their dead, while the new man obeys the Divine command, " Follow thou Me."

The death of Saul, therefore, and of his sons, and the defeat of the armies of Israel, do not, either when understood as referring to the glorification of the Lord or to the regeneration of man, mean the defeat and death of the spirit but of the flesh, or in reference to us, to what the apostle calls the putting off the sins of the flesh, dying with Christ that we may live with Him.

There is one particular relating to Saul's death that may seem to break through this analogy. Saul did not allow himself to be slain by the enemy ; he took his own life. Yet in this he may, with all reverence, be considered to have represented the Lord, in regard to a truth which He declared respecting His own death. He said, " I lay

down My life for the sheep. No man taketh it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of My Father" (John x. 15, 18). As "the Word in its inmost sense treats solely of the Lord, and in that sense are described all the states of the glorification of His humanity, or of its union with the Divinity; and likewise all the states involved in the subjugation of the hells, and in reducing to order all things therein, as well as all things in the heavens;" it is evident that not only the annihilation of the Israelitish army, and the death of Saul's sons, but the death of Saul himself, must in the inmost sense have reference to the Lord in His conflicts with the powers of darkness and His victories over them, and to the glorification of His humanity. There is something similar to the flight of Saul's army and the death of Saul himself in the history of the Lord's life, immediately before His last great trial. When Jesus was seized by the officers of the chief priests, all His disciples forsook Him and fled. That flight of the Lord's little flock was far more momentous than the flight of Saul's great army; and the evil angels who were then exerting all their power to prevent their own subjugation, no doubt rejoiced at their own success. When on that memorable occasion the Lord's disciples fled, the Lord Himself sought no way of escape, and offered no resistance, but yielded Himself up into the hands of His enemies. If He who could have saved His life yet voluntarily laid it down by giving Himself to what He knew was certain death, was not this self-immolation? And might it not be typified, in the history of a representative people, by the last act of one who, however imperfect as a man, was yet, as the Lord's anointed, a type of the Anointed One, the Messiah?

We are to remember, too, that it was truth Divine in the Lord's humanity that was tempted and that died. It is truth Divine that is meant by the Son of Man. This is Divine truth limited and accommodated to the apprehension of angels and men, truth clothed with the appearances that bring it down to their states of thinking and even of feeling respecting things spiritual and Divine. Therefore, wherever, in the New Testament, the Lord speaks of His personal sufferings and death, He always speaks of Himself as the Son of Man, not as the Son of God. By this name the Lord also speaks of Himself as the Word. And now, when the Lord cannot be tempted and put to death personally, all that was done to Him and suffered by Him in the days of His flesh, can only be done to and suffered by Him in His Word, the Scriptures of truth, and in His Church and people. There is also a correspondence between the Lord as the Eternal Word, clothed in human nature, and the Lord as the Revealed Word, clothed in human language. The human nature which the

Lord assumed had all man's hereditary imperfections ; and the language which the Revealed Word assumed in coming down to men, expresses the truth according to fallen man's power of apprehension. It is possible, therefore, for Christians to treat the Lord's Word as the Jews treated the Lord Himself. Christians can deny and oppose the truth, as the Jews denied and opposed the Lord ; they can even destroy the truth, as the Jews destroyed the Lord ; for they can crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put Him to an open shame (Heb. vi. 6). On this ground it is, that wherever in the Scriptures we read of the treatment which the Lord received, either in those who represented Him, as recorded in the Old Testament, or in His own person, as recorded in the New, we are to understand it as being descriptive of the treatment which the Word receives at the hands of those who are opposed to the principles of goodness and truth which it teaches, and are in the evil and false principles which it condemns.

This correspondence extends still further. Whatever relates to the Lord and His Word relates also to the Church ; for the Church is the Lord's mystical body, the image of His own glorious body, and is formed from and upheld by the truths of His Word. But the Church is not to be regarded only as consisting of the general body of the faithful. It consists essentially of the principles of goodness and truth, which the faithful individually believe as well as collectively acknowledge. Thus the chain of analogy and connection descends from the Lord, through His Word, to His Church, both in heaven and on earth, thus from the Lord to the least of His disciples. What relates to one, therefore, relates to all, differing in regard to each according to the place it occupies in the descending scale, from its first cause to its last effect.

The literal sense of the Word consists, to a great extent, of appearances of truth, such as belong to the natural world. And these appearances have within themselves the means of their own correction. Apparent truths can be proved to be appearances by their own inherent contrariety to real truth, both in the works and in the Word of God, when the real truth has, in any instance, been discovered or revealed. The apparent truths of the Word have indeed a spiritual sense ; but this spiritual sense is the soul or life which they contain, and which survives the sense of the letter, when this has perished. Let us be careful, however, to note that this is not to be understood of the whole letter of Scripture, but of its apparent truths only. For the literal sense of Scripture consists of real as well as of apparent truths. Real truths are true both in the letter and in the spirit, and are therefore immutable and eternal ; apparent truths are true in the spirit but not in the letter, and are therefore mutable and transitory. It is true both in the letter and in the spirit, that the

Lord is good to all, and His tender mercies are over all His works. It is true in the spirit but not in the letter, that the Lord is angry with the wicked every day. The spirit in this instance is opposite to the letter ; for the spiritual sense is, that the mercy of the Lord is extended even to the wicked, in every state of their life, although, from their state of contrariety to the Lord's nature, His love appears to them as anger and even as hatred. The literal sense must therefore die that the spiritual may live. Indeed, when the spiritual sense, which is the only real truth which the words contain, is discovered or revealed, the literal dies as it were by its own hand. The sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God in its genuine and spiritual sense, is that on which apparent truth falls. This is the case generally and particularly, in the whole Word and in every part. When the genuine and spiritual sense of any portion of Scripture becomes known its apparent truth perishes not naturally but by violence. Apparent truths, indeed, still remain in Scripture, as they remain in nature, but they are no longer regarded as real truths : they are not made the foundation of doctrine or the guide of life. Moreover, the Philistines cannot abuse them, at least to the destruction of the faith of others. They may seize the lifeless body and subject it to indignity, but the spirit they cannot insult and abuse.

This general view of the subject will enable us to enter more readily into the particulars of the history, which we will now consider.

When the men of Israel fled before the Philistines, they fell down slain in mount Gilboa. Gilboa means, and was, a fountain. It was near the valley of Jezreel, and gave its name to the town where the Israelitish army assembled, and to the mount where the men of Israel fell down wounded, where Saul's sons were slain, and where Saul himself died by his own hand. Emblematic of spiritual love, which is spiritual and eternal life, mount Gilboa becomes, for the time at least, emblematic of natural love, which, when it rules, is spiritual and eternal death. As the best things become by perversion the worst ; so things that have the best, come by the law of opposites to have the worst, signification. Zion was commanded to get up into a high mountain to proclaim the coming of the Saviour (Isa. xl. 9) ; and when He came, the devil took Him up into a high mountain to tempt Him (Luke iv. 5). The law was promulgated on mount Sinai, and was desecrated on mount Calvary. In these instances a mountain is emblematic of the holy principle of love to God, and of the unholy principle of the love of self. So we find in other parts of the Word. "Our persecutors are swifter than the eagles of the heaven : they pursued us upon the mountains" (Lam. iv. 19). "I will lay thy flesh upon the mountains, and fill the valleys with thy height" (Ezek. xxxii. 5). "Thy people is scattered upon the mountains, and no man

gathereth them " (Nahum iii. 18). When, as represented in the history before us, the truths of the Church flee before the errors of the world, or when true views and principles of religion recede before those which are false, the termination is in that which has relation to life; the true terminates in good, the false in evil.

When the Philistines had put the Israelitish army to flight, they pursued Saul and his sons, and soon overtook them. The three sons they slew, and Saul would have perished by the sword of the Philistines had he not fallen upon his own. In Saul, his sons, and the men of Israel we have represented the three component parts of every whole; the ruling principle itself, the leading principles by which it governs, and the common principles which are governed. The common principles form the basis on which the higher rest, and by which they are supported; and when these give way, all the others perish. In regard to the Word, the common truths of the letter form the basis of all its highest truths, and in them Divine truth is in its fulness and power. In regard to the Church, its common principles of life and worship form the basis of its higher principles of faith and love. In regard to man, his words and actions form the basis of his thoughts and affections. In all these that which is the basis is also the support of the higher principles; and when that gives way the others must fall. The men of Israel flee, Saul's sons are slain, and Saul himself perishes. Thus we see the force and significance of the inspired record, which expresses at once a literal fact and a spiritual truth. "So Saul died, and his three sons, and his armour-bearer, and all his men, that same day together. The battle went sore against Saul, and the archers hit him; and he was sore wounded of the archers." This is with one important difference like Jacob's prophetic blessing on his son Joseph. "The archers have sorely grieved him, and shot at him, and hated him: but his bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob; (from thence is the shepherd, the stone of Israel)" (Gen. xlix. 23, 24). This is prophetic, as that respecting Saul was representative, of the Lord; but Joseph represented the spiritual, as Saul represented the natural part of the Lord's humanity. So of the regenerate man. The archers who shot at Joseph denote those who are opposed to the members of the spiritual Church; for an archer denotes the spiritual man; a bow signifies doctrine, and arrows the things that belong to doctrine, thus the truths of doctrine with those who are in truths, and the falsities of doctrine with those who are in falsities. Both Joseph and Saul were shot at and sorely grieved by the archers. But there is this difference between them: Joseph's bow abode in his strength, for his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob; but Saul's bow abode not in his strength, for his

hands were not strengthened by the hands of the mighty One of Jacob. Not from him, therefore, but from David, came the shepherd, the stone of Israel. Nor from the Lord's pre-incarnate humanity in heaven but from His incarnate humanity on earth. Not from truth Divine but from Divine truth, came the shepherd of the sheep and the foundation and chief corner-stone of the temple. The maternal and finite were put off, and the paternal or infinite was put on.

There is one mentioned among the distinguished victims of this disastrous battle who must not be left unnoticed. Saul's armour-bearer refuses to thrust his master through, but follows his example, and dies with him. The armour-bearer is to the warrior what a servant is to his master or a minister to his lord. The only peculiarity in his case is, that he serves and ministers in respect to the implements of war. The armour-bearer is, therefore, related to his master as truth is related to goodness, or as the external is related to the internal. Truth serves goodness, and the external serves and ministers to the internal. As Saul represents the natural mind, he and his armour-bearer answer to the internal and the external of that mind. The internal of the natural mind is the seat of our motives, the external is the seat of our means; the one is principal, the other is instrumental. When the internal and the external are in perfect accord they act as one. When they are not, the external does not always or at once obey the behests of the internal. Saul's armour-bearer did not obey the command of his lord to thrust him through. And the reason given is, that he was sore afraid, not for his master but for himself. But when Saul had fallen upon his sword, his armour-bearer also fell upon his sword, and died with him. When the internal falls, the external falls also; when the internal dies, the external dies with it.

The issue of the battle had another disastrous effect. "When the men of Israel that were on the other side of the valley, and they that were on the other side Jordan, saw that the men of Israel fled, and that Saul and his sons were dead, they forsook the cities, and fled; and the Philistines came and dwelt in them." The inhabited cities of Israel represented doctrines of the Church filled with living truths. These cities, forsaken by the men of Israel, and inhabited by the Philistines, represented doctrines of the Church emptied of their truths, and occupied by falsities. If it be asked what this means, we may answer by a few examples. The doctrine of the Trinity is occupied by truths when it teaches that in God there are three Divine Essentials; it is filled with falsities when it teaches that in God there are three Divine Persons. The doctrine of the Atonement contains truths when it teaches that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself; it contains falsities when it teaches that the Son of God was in Christ reconciling God the Father to the world. The doctrine of the Resur-

rection is occupied by truths when it teaches that man rises in a spiritual body at the end of his life ; it is possessed by falsities when it teaches that he is to rise in a natural body at the end of the world. The doctrine of Faith contains the truth when it teaches that the faith of love saves ; it is possessed by falsities when it teaches that faith alone saves. Thus it is that the doctrines of the Church may in name remain while their essential nature is entirely changed. And thus it is that the Philistines come and dwell in the cities from which the men of Israël have fled.

What Saul feared the Philistines would do to him if he should fall into their hands they did to him after he was dead. "On the morrow [after the battle], when the Philistines came to strip the slain, they found Saul and his three sons fallen in mount Gilboa. And they cut off his head, and stripped off his armour, and sent into the land of the Philistines round about, to publish it in the house of their idols, and among the people. And they put his armour in the house of Ashtaroth : and they fastened his body to the wall of Beth-shan." The indignities which they offered to the body of Saul—decapitation and a kind of crucifixion—are expressive of indignities offered to the truth by the spiritual Philistines, whether they be among the Jews or among the Christians, and whether offered to the Lord as the Truth in person or to His Word as the Truth revealed. They cut off the head of the Lord's anointed, when they destroy the connection between the internal and external of His Word, which is the result of having destroyed the connection of the internal with the external of religion in themselves ; they strip off his armour, when they divest the Word of the truth which is for the defence of goodness against the assaults of evil ; and they publish it in the house of their idols and among the people, when the triumph of the false principle over the true enters into all their worship and life.

The Philistines putting Saul's armour in the house of Ashtaroth is very significant. There is good reason to believe that the idol goddess Ashtaroth represented the moon. In Scripture the moon is an emblem of faith, and in regard to the Philistines, of faith alone, the idolatry of which was represented by the worship of Ashtaroth. Saul's armour is placed in the house of Ashtaroth, when truths that should defend goodness are devoted to a faith that claims the power to save without goodness, and which the impure rites of the worship of Ashtaroth too plainly represented.

Beth-shan, to the wall of which the Philistines fastened the body of Saul, was part of the inheritance of Manasseh, but the men of that tribe were unable to drive out the Canaanites, whom, however, when their strength increased, they made tributary (Josh. xvii. 11-13 ; Judges i. 27). Beth-shan signifies a house of rest. The faithful find their house of rest in the good they have acquired by obedience to the

truth ; but the unfaithful find their house of rest in the evil, which they call good, into which they have settled by making the truth obedient to them. The body of Saul is fastened to the wall of Beth-shan, when the good, which has been stripped of its truth and deprived of its power, is exposed, for derisive mockery, on what, as a city of Manasseh, would have represented truth defending goodness, but as a city of the Philistines, represents falsity defending evil, if not in life at least in doctrine. There are two kinds of Solifidians. Both teach that good does not justify, but only one teaches that evil does not condemn. This is the secret if not the open belief of those who are in evil, and if it does not manifest itself in this life it will in the life to come. There also the truth will be seen by those who desire to see it. "When you come out of natural light into spiritual light, as you will after death, inquire what faith is and what charity is ; and you will clearly see that faith is charity in form, therefore that charity is the all of faith, consequently that it is the soul, life, and essence of faith, just as affection is of thought, and as sound is of speech ; and if you desire it, you will see the formation of faith from charity, like the formation of speech from sound, because they correspond."

But though fastened to the wall of Beth-shan, the body of Saul was not allowed to remain there. "When the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead heard of that which the Philistines had done to Saul ; all the valiant men arose, and went all night, and took the body of Saul and the bodies of his sons from the wall of Beth-shan, and came to Jabesh, and burnt them there. And they took their bones, and buried them under a tree at Jabesh, and fasted seven days." Jabesh-gilead was the place where Saul first displayed his martial courage and kingly power, when that city was besieged by the Ammonites ; and it is highly appropriate that the men of Jabesh, for whom Saul had wrought so signal a deliverance, should rescue his mangled body and those of his sons from the wall of their enemies, and give them, what was so much esteemed in those times, an honourable burial with befitting obsequies. There is another fact which makes this act of the men of Jabesh appropriate and significant. Jabesh belonged to the half-tribe of Manasseh on the other side Jordan, as Beth-shan belonged to the half-tribe of Manasseh on this side Jordan, thus signifying the external and the internal of the same principle of spiritual goodness, which the tribe that sprung from the eldest son of Joseph represented. The truth which was desecrated by the Philistines in the one city was restored by the men of Jabesh in the other. The men of Jabesh acted very differently towards Saul to what the men of Keilah did towards David ; no doubt for the spiritual reason that David's trials were still in progress, but Saul's trials were now ended. To complete the representative history of the first king of Israel, it was necessary that he

should be buried; for burial signifies resurrection. And by whose instrumentality could his burial be more appropriately effected than by the men of Jabesh-gilead? and where could his ashes find a more suitable resting-place than in Jabesh-gilead itself? The noble act of the valiant men of Jabesh exemplifies the Divine law of life that no good deed sincerely performed is ever lost, and that the first-implanted good is realized as the last. Between Saul's first kingly act of heroism to the men of Jabesh, and their last act of heroism to him, many dark days and nights have intervened. But regarding Saul in his typical character, and his persecution of David as representative of the enmity of the natural mind against the spiritual, we can see that when the natural dies and is put off, it becomes like a seed sown in the ground, from which a new tree springs forth. "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." But there are some, as the apostle says, who "shall be saved; yet so as by fire" (1 Cor. iii. 15). The Lord says by Zechariah, in a prophecy of the Incarnation, "Two parts therein shall be cut off and die. . . . And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried" (xiii. 8, 9). And Malachi says that "the Lord is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' sope: and He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver" (iii. 2, 3). The burning of the bodies of Saul and his sons indicates this kind of purification. It does not appear that cremation was a Jewish custom. And even if it be supposed that there might be special reasons for burning in this case, the spiritual meaning of the act is no less clear, as well as highly instructive. Nor is it to be understood of the regenerate only, but also of Him who passed through all the fiery ordeals of human experience.

When the men of Jabesh had burned the bodies, they buried the bones under a tree and fasted seven days. Two acts of this kind are mentioned in the Old Testament. When Deborah, Rebekah's nurse, died, they buried her under an oak-tree, which was called the oak of weeping (Gen. xxxv. 8); and when Joseph went up to bury his father, they made a mourning for him seven days (l. 10). In the apparently simple incidents of Deborah's death and burial an important truth relating to the Lord and to the regenerate man are contained. Deborah, the nurse, signifies that which the Lord received from His mother and by which He was nourished from infancy; this was the hereditary nature, in itself frail and evil, against which the Lord fought, and which He expelled, so that at length He ceased to be the son of Mary. The rejection of hereditary evil out of the natural mind entirely and for ever is meant by Deborah being buried under an oak. Such is the meaning, generally, of the bones of Saul and his sons being

buried under a tree in Jabesh. But why, it may be thought, should burial signify both rejection and resurrection? Because the rejection of the old implies the resurrection of the new. This was the case with the Lord Himself. He laid down the life of His human mother that He might take up the life of His Divine Father.

“For when the son of Mary died the Son of God arose.”

The seven days' fast which the men of Jabesh observed, when they buried the bones of Saul, while expressive of their own grief on account of the loss of their king, is expressive also of mourning over the defeat or the loss of truth and goodness, which is one of the meanings of fasting. There is sometimes resemblance where there is no correspondence; but may there not be both a resemblance and a correspondence between the case of Saul, as the Lord's anointed, and that of the Lord Himself? Both were crucified by their enemies and buried by their friends. The disciples of the one and the subjects of the other mourned and wept over their loss; and both sorrowed over the blighted hope that it was he who should have redeemed Israel. He on whom had been “all the desire of Israel,” to lead out their armies, and fight their battles, and deliver them from the oppression of the Philistines, had been conquered by the very power he should have broken. Saul and his sons and his army were no more. The panic-stricken Israelites on both sides of the Jordan were fleeing from their cities, which their pursuing enemies entered and occupied. Philistia was jubilant. Her gods, to whom her sons offered the most precious trophies of their victory, were held to have triumphed over Jehovah. To despairing Israel all seemed to be lost. A brighter day is soon to dawn upon them. But for the time fasting is the most suitable expression of their state. So with spiritual Israel, “The days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those days.”

CHAPTER I.

PRELIMINARY.

SAUL'S reign is ended. David's reign has not yet actually commenced. Although David had long been the anointed king of Israel, his reign is commonly considered not to have begun till he came to Hebron, and was anointed king over the house of Judah. The monarchy in Israel had not yet become hereditary; and the saying that the king never dies, had not become a maxim of state. The intervening period between Saul's death and David's assuming the reins of government would be called an interregnum. But as our object does not require constitutional accuracy or formal precision, it will be no serious violation of historic propriety to follow up the end of the reign of Saul with the beginning of the reign of David. This will better suit the spiritual requirements of the history. The Divine government knows no interruption. It may pass through a succession of forms and degrees; but all these are connected with each other either by continuity or contiguity. The government of truth Divine is not separate, although it is distinct, from that of Divine truth. As successive states of the Divine government in the human mind, during the progress of the regenerate life, the higher is evolved from the lower by the orderly process of development, which is the progressive advancement of a being from his lowest to his highest condition of existence. What is evolved must exist in embryo in that from which it is produced. Divine truth exists in embryo in truth Divine, and Divine good in Divine truth. It is as a seed sown in the earth, which "first puts forth the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear" (Mark iv. 28). It is not to be supposed that this seed is in man by nature. The human mind consists indeed of three degrees, answering to the three heavens, the natural, the spiritual, and the celestial. These exist in embryo in every human being; and they are successively opened and perfected in those who are regenerated to the highest attainable state. The opening and perfecting of the first or natural degree is described by the reign of Saul; the second or spiritual by the reign of David; the third or celestial by the reign of Solomon. But these degrees are opened and perfected by means of the seeds of truth that are sown in the mind. For these seeds, descending as they do from the Lord through all the heavens, have in

themselves, besides the Divine truth, all the degrees of truth that exist in heaven ; and it is by the opening and perfecting of these in the mind that the mind itself is opened and perfected. The blade, the ear, and the corn are thus successively produced.

What is true of the regenerate man is true in a supereminent sense and measure of the Lord Himself, as a man born into the world, but a man immeasurably transcending all other men, in being the Son of a Divine Father though of a human mother. As the son of Mary, He possessed the external coverings of the three degrees of the human mind, and these in Him, as in us, were finite ; but as the Son of God, He possessed indeed the three degrees of mind answering to the three heavens, but in Him these degrees were not merely such as they are in the minds of angels and men, but such as they are in the Divine mind itself, and therefore infinite. In the Lord's paternal humanity, which was within and above His natural humanity, there was, from His birth, an infinite capacity, or a capacity for the infinite ; and as these degrees were opened and perfected, according to the order of human development, the Lord's humanity became actually, as from birth it had been potentially, Divine. The Lord's glorification, like man's regeneration, commenced at His birth. The first of glorification, like the first of regeneration, consisted in acquiring and laying up, in the tender receptacles in the interiors of the mind, the remains of goodness and truth, and thus in forming the rudiments of the states which were to be developed and perfected by actual glorification. This is the descending series : first the celestial, then the spiritual, and lastly the natural. This descending series of Divine operations, both in relation to the Lord and to man, is described, in the internal series, in the history of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The ascending series, or the development of these rudimentary states, is described in the history of Saul, David, and Solomon.

The first of these ascending states, described by the history of Saul, we have now considered, both with reference to the glorification of the Lord and the regeneration of man. Imperfectly explained the subject has necessarily been, especially as it relates to the Lord's glorification. If, at best, we can have but a general and obscure knowledge of the regeneration of man, how much more is this true of the glorification of the Lord. And yet it is highly necessary for the Christian to know something of that Divine work by which the Lord provided for the salvation of the human race. Next to the knowledge of the Lord as the only God, the knowledge of His work in the flesh is the most precious that the Scriptures reveal. It is justly maintained by Christians that the Atonement is the corner-stone of the Christian Church. The glorification of the Lord's humanity is the Atonement. It was this which effected the reconciliation of man to God, or of the

human nature to the Divine, in the person of the Lord as the Saviour. And it is by the transforming power of the Divine humanity that men are reconciled to God, and, being reconciled, can be saved by His life. "If, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life" (Rom. v. 10). The life, spiritual and eternal, which dwells in all fulness in the Lord's reconciled and glorified humanity, is that from which men have spiritual and eternal life; and that life transforms them into images of the Lord Himself. This great and blessed truth is destined to transform the whole Christian system as it now is. It sweeps away the entire scheme of substituted punishment and imputed righteousness, which forms the very essence of modern Christianity. But it is not a system of destruction and negation. It gives much more than it takes away. It gives gold for brass, and silver for iron (Isa. lx. 17). For merely natural it gives spiritual views of the justice and mercy of God. Instead of the Lord suffering in our *stead*, to satisfy the demands of Divine justice, it shows the Lord suffering for our *sake*, to satisfy the yearnings of Divine love. It presents the Incarnation in a light of marvellous clearness and transcendent beauty. It shows that God assumed human nature for the purpose of making it perfect through suffering; and having made it perfect, that He can now make men perfect, by conducting them through a life, the image of that which He himself lived upon earth. This is not the doctrine of those who teach that the Lord's work on earth consisted in showing men a perfect example. Men no doubt needed a perfect example; but they needed still more the will and the power to follow that example. These were what the glorification of humanity provided for them. The glorified humanity of the Lord is an ever-present power to prompt men to will and enable them to do of the Lord's good pleasure. It contains all the merit and righteousness which the Lord acquired by His Divine-human life upon earth. Indeed the Lord's humanity not only contains but *IS* merit and righteousness. By living according to the commandments a man has the law inscribed on his heart; by living according to the commandments, or rather by living the commandments themselves, the Lord became the law itself. But this is true in a wider sense than is generally understood. In its largest sense the law means the whole Word; and this the Lord fulfilled, both in the letter and the spirit, in its utmost extent and in all its degrees. Thus did He become the Word in ultimates, as, from eternity, He had been in first principles. This is the Word of which Moses prophetically and spiritually says, "The Word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it" (Deut. xxx. 14); and of which the Lord Himself said, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end" (Matt. xxviii. 20).

In the history of David's reign we have, in the internal sense, the history of a more advanced stage of the Lord's glorification and of man's regeneration than we possess in the history of the reign of Saul. It describes, as we have said, the process by which the Lord made His humanity Divine truth, David representing the Lord as Divine truth, or, the Divine-spiritual principle in the Lord's humanity. In the secondary sense David represents the spiritual man; and the history of his reign describes that stage of the regenerate life during which man is made spiritual, or during which the spiritual degree of the mind is perfected. We do not say opened, for the opening of the spiritual mind must be understood to have been represented by the circumstance of David having been anointed king during the reign, and long before the death, of Saul. There are three different states of the natural mind in relation to the spiritual, which may be supposed to succeed each other with those who pass from death unto life. There is a state of the natural mind when the spiritual mind is shut, a state of the natural mind when the spiritual is not open and yet not shut, and a state of the natural mind when the spiritual mind is open.

We shall not attempt to follow the history of David, as describing in series the progress of the regenerate life which his reign represents; but we hope to draw from it some spiritual instruction and practical lessons that may direct and guide us in our progress through the regenerate life, as the only way to the kingdom of our Divine Sovereign.

CHAPTER II.

DAVID RECEIVES TIDINGS OF THE DEFEAT OF ISRAEL AND THE DEATH OF SAUL.

2 Samuel i. 1-16.

DAVID had not long returned from the slaughter of the Amalekites when tidings reached him of the disastrous issue of the battle of Gilboa. On the third day after his return to Ziklag a man came to him "with his clothes rent, and earth upon his head: and fell to the earth before him, and did obeisance." He had come from the camp of Israel. To David's eager inquiry how the battle went, he answered that Israel had been defeated, and that Saul and Jonathan were dead. To the question, "How knowest thou that Saul and Jonathan his son be dead?" the young man replied, "As I happened by chance upon mount Gilboa, behold, Saul leaned upon his spear; and, lo, the chariots and horsemen followed hard after him. And when he looked behind him, he saw me, and called unto me. And I answered, Here am

I. And he said unto me, Who art thou? And I answered him, I am an Amalekite. He said unto me again, Stand, I pray thee, upon me, and slay me : for anguish is come upon me, because my life is yet whole in me. So I stood upon him, and slew him, because I was sure that he could not live after that he was fallen : and I took the crown that was upon his head, and the bracelet that was on his arm, and have brought them hither unto my lord." As there is some slight difference between this account of Saul's death and that given in the previous chapter, where nothing is said of the young Amalekite, some have supposed that his tale is an invention, intended to win the favour of David, who, he seems to have believed, was to be the future king of Israel. His story does not, however, contradict the previous narrative, but may be consistently understood as supplementing it. Although Saul had fallen upon his sword, he might be still lingering in agony, and desire to have his sufferings ended. The sacred writer says nothing to throw discredit on the relation, and we may therefore accept it as true.

There is something mournful as well as significant in Saul receiving his death-wound from the hand of an Amalekite. Amalek had been his great stumbling-stone and rock of offence. His mistaken leniency to the sinners, against whom the Lord had sworn that He would have war from generation to generation, had rent from him the kingdom ; and now he invites from one of the doomed race the stroke that is to deprive him at once of his life and his kingdom. In the government of God, as in His written Word, there is the law of retribution. In the Divine mind, and in the Lord's dealings with His creatures, there is nothing, in the ordinary sense, of retributive justice ; but there is the eternal and immutable law of order, that good and evil return into the bosom of those who do them. Not always, however, does evil return to the bosom of the evil-doer as its eternal dwelling-place. To the repentant it returns as an avenging spirit in the way of judgment. It comes, like the Amalekite to Saul, to extinguish the last spark of the expiring fire of the corrupt selfhood. In judgment, not only in the other world but in this, all states return, like the events of life to the memory of the drowning man. As these states appear, the mind passes judgment upon them ; when such as it justifies remain and such as it condemns disappear. It is true that the mind itself is not the judge of its own state. The Lord is Judge. But the Divine Judge does not call men before an outward bar, to be tried by external evidence. The bar is conscience, the judge is eternal truth, and the witness is the inward testimony of the fulfilled or violated law of life. It is therefore the Lord that judges, because it is His truth that judges in us, or by which we judge ourselves. In passing through this ordeal, in which evil is to be severed from good, the penitent sinner calls down imprecations on himself, as Saul

invited the Amalekite to slay him. For one of the truest marks of penitence for sin is self-condemnation, especially for that sin which comes home to the conscience with the most agonizing sense of guilt before God. And the more the sin itself is hated, the more is retribution felt to be deserved. But this very sense of desert turns the curse into a blessing ; for like the scape-goat it carries the sin away into the wilderness. But the Amalekite not only slew Saul ; he brought his crown and his bracelet to David. In ancient times kings wore a crown and an armlet in war, one as symbol of wisdom, the other of power. We have only to substitute spiritual for natural war to see in them symbols of spiritual wisdom and power as directed against evil and falsity. The crown and bracelet were provisionally transferred from Saul to David, to represent the elevation of the principles they represented from the natural into the spiritual mind ; and in the Lord, who was eminently represented by the kings of Israel, from truth Divine to Divine truth.

When the Amalekite had told the result of the battle and the fate of Saul, " then David took hold on his clothes, and rent them ; and likewise all the men that were with him : and they mourned, and wept, and fasted until even, for Saul, and for Jonathan his son, and for the people of the Lord, and for the house of Israel ; because they were fallen by the sword." The character of David here shines forth with peculiar lustre. Though now delivered from a persecuting enemy, and raised, as he must have felt, to the throne of Israel, he shows no feeling of satisfied resentment or gratified ambition, but, in evident sincerity, mourns with religious fervour, not only for the people of the Lord and the house of Israel, but for Saul himself. The several marks of sorrow which David and his men exhibited are symbolic of the affections which enter into that deeper sorrow which theirs represented. David and they that were with him taking hold of their garments and rending them, represented mourning on account of Divine truth lost, and cast away by those who were in faith separate from charity ; for the regal office signified Divine truth, and the Philistines represented those who were in faith separate from charity. Mourning is grief of heart and weeping is grief of mind, or of will and understanding ; and fasting is grief on account of the privation of goodness and truth, which support the life of love and faith in the Church, and in the minds of her members. The even, till which they mourned, is the end of the Church, or the end of the spiritual state of desolation, when mourning is ended. For, as we have said, every end is followed by a new beginning. When the Church perishes, a new Church is raised up in its stead ; and the end of every state in the life of those who are of the spiritual Israel is succeeded by another in the ascending scale higher and better.

Another scene, in singular contrast to the mourning and weeping of David and his men over the fate of Saul and his army, now presents itself. With that sudden and apparently easy transition from tenderness to severity which, judging from Scripture, marked the Jewish character, and which is more or less characteristic of all external men, David passes from the meekness of the mourner to the zeal of the avenger. He demands of the young Amalekite, "How wast thou not afraid to stretch forth thine hand to destroy the Lord's anointed?" and calling one of the young men, he said, "Go near, and fall upon him. And he smote him that he died." The Amalekite, although he seems to be free from moral blame in ending Saul's miserable life, is yet put to death as a regicide, because it was a deadly sin to destroy the Lord's anointed. He should have known this; for, although an Amalekite, he was the son of a sojourner, called in our version a stranger, and a foreigner, living among the Israelites to learn their laws and customs. He represented one who is desirous of being instructed in the principles of the Church. One who is instructed in the truth, and yet destroys it, is guilty of sin. Therefore David says to the dying Amalekite, "Thy blood be upon thy head; for thy mouth hath testified against thee, saying, I have slain the Lord's anointed." The spiritual lesson we learn from this is, that he who, knowing the truth, destroys it, will himself be destroyed. He indeed brings destruction upon himself: his blood is upon his own head; for his mouth utters his own condemnation. "By thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned."

Besides this general lesson there are some particulars that deserve our attention. It would seem as if the Amalekite had done both Saul and David a service. He killed the dying king, and brought the insignia of his royalty to his Divinely appointed successor. And yet he is slain. In the simple fact we can see this meaning: that which slays the natural is in turn slain by the spiritual. But why should this be represented in the narrative as an act of vengeance due to blood-guiltiness? The representative character of Amalek accounts for this appearance. Amalek represents falsity grounded in interior evil, which steals in upon the mind when it is suffering from the depression and feebleness produced by severe trial and temptation; like certain diseases to which the body is liable when it is in a low condition. We see this shadowed forth in the present instance. Saul had anticipated the last effects of defeat in battle, and David had but returned from the pursuit and slaughter of the Amalekites. The young man happened by chance on mount Gilboa at a time that was suitable to his own natural and representative character and to the condition of Saul. He was also behind Saul, as of old his people came behind enfeebled Israel (Deut. xxv. 18); for the falsity of interior evil

enters rather into the will, which is behind, than into the understanding, which is before. Saul looked behind him, and saw this son of Amalek ; as the Lord turned and looked upon Peter (Luke xxii.), and as John turned to see the voice that spake with him (Rev. i. 12). That which enters into and affects the will causes the understanding to turn in that direction, that the intellect may perceive what the will has felt. And Saul's understanding was now opened to see the nature of the evil to which, in the hour of trial, he had weakly yielded. When the young Amalekite came to David, he came in something of the manner in which Agag came to Samuel, delicately. He came, indeed, as a friend to David, as he had seemed to be to Saul. But his representative character is the same in regard to both. This is seen even in his bringing to David the dead king's crown and bracelet. The evil, or rather the evil spirits—for evil has no abstract existence—which the Amalekites represent, insinuate themselves into the hearts of men, not only through the objects of their ambition, as these insignia of royalty might be to David, but even, in the case of spiritual men, through the spiritual principles which these insignia represent. Evil spirits, like evil men, can simulate characters not their own, and can possess themselves of the knowledges, which are but the symbols, of wisdom and honour, as the crown and bracelet were of the dignity and power of their royal owner. Through these they seek to act upon the minds of men whom they desire to seduce.

We can see a sufficient reason, on the ground of the spiritual sense, for David slaying the seemingly blameless Amalekite. Not that an act of natural injustice could be permitted for the purpose of representing a spiritual truth, or teaching a spiritual lesson. But spiritual causes lie at the root of all natural effects. And although the effect may sometimes seem different in its character from that of the cause, there is still a real relation between them, the outward seeming being all that produces the apparent want of harmony.

CHAPTER III.

DAVID'S LAMENTATION OVER SAUL AND JONATHAN.

2 *Samuel* i. 17-27.

DAVID'S elegy over Saul and Jonathan, considered only as the expression of his own personal sentiments and feelings, is admitted to be one of the noblest and tenderest to be found in any language. It reflects the highest credit upon David himself. Had Saul been a bosom friend we could not have expected more ; had he been an

honourable rival, we should have been satisfied with less ; but when we reflect that for years he had been a bitter and implacable enemy, David's lamentation over him has a moral sublimity worthy of our highest admiration, and, still more, of our faithful imitation. It is true that David speaks of Saul as the Lord's anointed, yet much of the praise he bestows upon him is for his personal qualities, although he says nothing of his general character.

In the inner sense both Saul and David are to be regarded in their representative character. In the highest sense, both are types of the Lord Himself, as King ; and the Lord is King as Divine truth. When Pilate demanded of Jesus, who had said His kingdom was not of this world, " Art Thou a king then ? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a KING," which was a form of affirmation ; and He immediately adds in explanation, " To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the TRUTH." Both Saul and David represented the Lord as the Truth ; and David, in his lamentation over Saul, bears witness to the Truth. His description of Saul is, in the spiritual sense, a description of the Truth.

When the elegy is thus understood, we can see the appropriateness and significance of that otherwise difficult and almost unintelligible exordium to it, " Also he bade them teach the children of Judah the use of the bow : behold, it is written in the book of Jasher." We need not trouble ourselves with the conjectures of commentators as to the meaning and purpose of this seemingly strange introduction. The book in which it is said to be written suggests a mysterious meaning. Jasher was a book of the ancient Church, written by those who understood the law of correspondence between spiritual and natural things, and who therefore taught spiritual truths by natural images. In the symbolic language of Scripture, which is written according to this law, a bow corresponds to doctrine. Arrows correspond to truths, but to truths opposing falsities ; and truths proceed and have their power from doctrine, as arrows from the bow, or stones from the sling. But what connection is there between this lamentation over Saul and Jonathan and teaching Judah the bow ? The same connection that there is between revealing truths and teaching doctrine. A religious doctrine is a conclusion from all the truths of the Word relating to one subject, as a doctrine of science is a conclusion from one class of the facts of nature. Truths are made known to men to enable them to do good and resist evil. But in order to employ truths effectually they must know them, not only singly, but in combination. The Word contains all religious truth ; but the Word is not understood without doctrine. Without doctrine the mind can have but an obscure and confused notion of what the Scriptures teach. Therefore Saul and Jonathan are celebrated that Judah may learn the bow. One reason why the

Church must learn the doctrines as well as know the truths of the Word is this. The Word, as we have remarked, consists to a considerable extent of apparent truths, which, unless explained by doctrine, may be adopted and confirmed as real truths, which then become errors. Doctrine is formed from the real truths of Scripture; and these, when brought into a doctrinal form, explain its apparent truths. This distinction between truth and doctrine, and the formation of doctrine from the real truths of the Word, are taught symbolically in this Divine composition. Saul and Jonathan, as formerly explained, both represent Divine truth, such as it is in the letter of the Word, but Saul represents its apparent truths and Jonathan its real truths. In accordance with this, David speaks of Saul as wielding the sword, because the sword is the emblem of truth, and of Jonathan as wielding the bow, because the bow is an emblem of doctrine. It is Judah, too, that is to be taught the bow, because Judah represents those who are in good, as distinguished from those who are in truth, or the celestial, as distinguished from the spiritual; and the celestial desire and acquire only the real truths of the Word, which teach nothing but the doctrine of love and charity. This is the doctrine meant by the bow; so that to teach Judah the bow is to teach the doctrine of love to God and charity to man. This also is a key to the subject of the lamentation, in the spiritual sense; otherwise the introduction would have no relation to the subject. We shall see as we proceed that there is an intimate connection between what the Philistines had destroyed and what Judah was to be taught.

In David's lamentation, we are to regard Saul as the Lord's anointed, not as the frail and erring mortal that he was; as the representative of the second Adam, not as the too faithful image of the first. In the regenerate man, a corresponding distinction is to be made. Regeneration does not destroy the distinction between the spirit and the flesh, although the Christian no longer lives in the flesh, but in the spirit. The corrupt selfhood is not abolished but only subdued; and the Christian, while with the mind he serves the law of God, knows that in himself, that is, in his flesh, dwelleth no good thing (Rom. vii. 18).

David eulogizes Saul as the beauty of Israel, and both Saul and Jonathan as the mighty, as lovely and pleasant in their lives, as swifter than eagles and stronger than lions. Terrible to the enemies of Israel, the bow of Jonathan turned not back, the sword of Saul returned not empty, from the blood of the slain, from the fat of the mighty. Bountiful to his people, Saul clothed the daughters of Israel in scarlet with delights, and put on ornaments of gold upon their apparel.

Lofty as the strain of this eulogium is, its language and imagery but

faintly describe the beauty and might of Him whom Saul, as the anointed king of Israel, represented, whether we apply it to His person even when veiled in our frail humanity, or to His works of redemption and salvation, in which He overcame the enemies of His kingdom and enriched and adorned His Church with the precious gifts of His grace and truth. Saul, as the anointed king of Israel, represented the Lord as Divine truth; and the destruction of Divine truth in the Church is the general subject of the lamentation.

But it may be well to strike a lower key, and consider the lamentation as it applies to the regenerate and to the work of regeneration. These are not only images of the Lord and of His work in the flesh; but the Lord is in every regenerate man, and works out his deliverance from the evils of his nature, and brings him into newness of life, by a process similar to that by which He overcame the powers of darkness, and glorified His own humanity, and ordained heaven, and established a spiritual Church upon earth. The Lord's work in the flesh is effected anew, in a finite measure, in every true disciple. This is the reason why the greater work is the archetype of the less, and why a description of one is, only in a different degree, a description of the other.

Truth sanctified by goodness, or a true faith anointed with the oil of love, is the beauty of Israel, because it beautifies the meek with salvation, clothing the affections of charity with the beautiful garments of wisdom and righteousness, woven of the scarlet threads of practical truth and adorned with the golden ornaments of practical goodness. Whatever graces beautify the mind, whatever virtues adorn the character, all are derived from the Lord through a living faith in Him, as our God and Saviour, and are to be admired and exalted as His gifts and as the images of His perfections. As faith animated by love is the beauty of Israel, love acting by faith is the mighty; for by the sword of truth and the bow of doctrine it overcomes what is false and evil, as opposed to that which is true and good, as principles in the understanding and the heart. The doctrine of the true Church, which is the doctrine of love and charity, is the bow that turns not back, and the truth of doctrine is the sword that returns not empty, from the blood of the slain and the fat of the mighty, or from the conflict with what is false and evil.

This is the spiritual ground of David's praise of Saul, as the Lord's anointed. It shows forth the excellence of a true and living faith, which the anointed king represented, as opposed to a false and dead faith, of which the Philistines were the types. It shows also the benefits and blessings to be derived from a true faith, when exalted to its true place in the mind, and allowed to have its due influence in the government of the ends and actions of life. This will ever be the case

with the true Israel of the Lord. It is this which marks the true disciple of Jesus as an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile. For who are the Israel of the Lord but those who practically acknowledge Him as the King of Israel, the Anointed of Jehovah? And the Lord is practically acknowledged as the King of Israel when His laws are written in the heart and obeyed in the life; when the affections and thoughts, words and works of those who call themselves by the name of Christ, are so governed by His love and truth, that, for the Lord's sake, they do to others as they would that others should do to them. This is the law and the prophets. The Lord governs where His law rules. Where His law is exalted He is exalted, where it is fulfilled He is glorified. How beautiful must be the state and character of one who is thus brought under the hallowing influence of the Lord's Divine law of love and truth! The truth and love contained unitedly in the Divine law, are like Saul and Jonathan, who were lovely and pleasant in their lives, and in their death they were not divided. Death cannot divide those whose lives have been lovely and pleasant, whether we apply this beautiful sentiment to persons or to principles. Those who are united in that lovely connection which exists between the true and the good, and especially as they exist in the two sexes, will not be separated by death. Their union is as firm and indissoluble as that between the Lord and the soul of the true believer. "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For Thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. viii. 35-39). How beautiful would the lives of Christians be if they were a faithful transcript of the spiritual law of love to the Lord, as exhibited in charity to man, which ~~our Lord~~ Himself revealed, when He said, "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another, as I have loved you, that ye also love one another"! (John, xv. 12) The command to love one another, and to love each other as ourselves, is old; but to love each other as the Lord Jesus has loved us, this is new. This is Christian love. Not ourselves, but Jesus, is the standard of love to one another. He gave Himself for us; lived for us, suffered for us, died for us. Are we willing to give ourselves for each other? But this is not only true love, it is also true faith. This faith is the beauty of Israel, and the mighty also. Faith imbued with love is beauty, love working by faith is power. Faith has no beauty but from love; love has no power but

by faith. Separate, they have neither beauty nor power ; united, they have both. The religion of faith alone is religion deprived of those elements which give it all its beauty and might.

This is the evil and the calamity that David lamented in his lamentation over Saul and over Jonathan his son. The Philistines had slain the beauty of Israel upon the high places, the mighty had fallen under their instruments of violence ; and those who were lovely and pleasant in their lives, and were swifter than eagles and stronger than lions, had died together in the conflict with error and evil. The destructive nature and effects of faith alone are thus expressively described. Faith in its true state is the safeguard as well as the guide of charity. But when that which should be a protection against evil and a guide in the performance of good, claims to itself all saving power, it destroys all that is vital and saving in religion. We shall see this still more clearly if we turn our attention to some of the particulars in which this is symbolically described in the pathetic lamentation of David.

“The beauty of Israel is slain upon thy high places : how are the mighty fallen !” The high places are the interior affections of the mind. These are constantly represented in Scripture by high places, especially by mountains, as here by the mountains of Gilboa. The will is the highest faculty of the mind. It is the seat of the affections. In Scripture and in popular language it is called the heart. The Divine law is said to be written in the heart when it is loved with the highest and best affections. Men are required to love God with all the heart—with the will and all its affections. Faith is also, in its highest state, placed in the heart. This is the high place of living, practical faith. “For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness” (Rom. x. 10). When the faith and the love of God are quenched in the affections, and His law is effaced from the heart, the beauty of Israel is slain upon its high places, the mighty are fallen. This is the death and the fall which David, moved by the Holy Spirit, lamented. And he exclaims, “Tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the streets of Askelon ; lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice, lest the daughters of the uncircumcised triumph.” In the literal sense this is rather a rhetorical than an actual wish, since David knew that the issue of the battle must have been already published throughout the whole of Philistia. The same idea is often repeated in Scripture. God speaks and is spoken of as doing great things for Israel, that His Name may be known among the nations ; and fears are expressed lest the nations hear and rejoice over the people’s calamities, and regard them as evidences of the inability of their God to defend them. This idea is the basis of another and higher one. In the inner sense the nations are the evil affections and false thoughts of the natural mind,

while the Israelites are the good affections and true thoughts of the spiritual mind, or, of the natural and of the spiritual man. The natural man being opposed to the spiritual, there is war between them. The contest is to determine whether the spiritual shall rule over the natural, or the natural over the spiritual. The consequences of this contest are most momentous. If final they are eternal. There is therefore a deep spiritual reason for David's passionate lamentation over Saul, and for his exclamation, "Tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the streets of Askelon." But this reason refers to more than the victory itself. That had already been gained by the enemies of Israel. The telling of the tidings in Gath and publishing them in the streets of Askelon, and the joy and triumph of the daughters of the Philistines over the victory, is another. This we have now to consider, and this will be seen from the spiritual meaning of Gath and Askelon, and the daughters of the Philistines.

These two principal cities of the Philistines belonged at one time to the children of Israel. In the time of the judges Judah took Askelon (i. 18), and in the time of Samuel "the cities which the Philistines had taken from Israel were restored to Israel, from Ekron even unto Gath" (1 Sam. vii. 14); but they had passed into the possession of the Philistines again. These cities, therefore, now represent true doctrines of the Church falsified, like the cities from which the Israelites fled, and in which the Philistines came and dwelt. The two principal doctrines of the Word, and therefore of the true Church, are the doctrines of love to God and charity to man. These doctrines or laws of life are the conditions of salvation, because they teach the very graces that save. But when love to the Lord and charity to man are abolished as conditions of salvation, except as fulfilled by a substitute, and faith is held to be sufficient for salvation, these doctrines are falsified, and become as Askelon and Gath in the hands of the Philistines. Truths falsified, unlike simple errors, are not only aliens but enemies. They inspire the mind with hatred of the truth, and cause it to rejoice and triumph over the truth, when it seems to yield the palm of victory to the reasonings and fallacies of the natural man which have been brought against it. The Jewish Philistines in the time of our Lord, who had made the commandment of God of none effect by their tradition, which they had done by perverting the truth, rejoiced and triumphed over the destruction of the truth in the person of Him who was the Truth itself. When the two witnesses, who bore testimony to the doctrines of love to the Lord and love to man, were killed by the beast, which was the type of faith without love or works, they that dwelt on earth rejoiced over them, and made merry, and sent gifts to one another, because the two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth (Rev. xi. 10). To kill spiritually

means to deny, reject, destroy ; but to triumph over the slain is to confirm the mind in a state of denial. This is the reason that David deprecates the tidings of Israel's defeat and the death of Saul being published in the cities of the enemy, lest the daughters of the victors should rejoice. The denial of truth is especially confirmed when the affections of the will respond to the decisions of the understanding. The affections of the will are meant by daughters ; and we have here the daughters of the Philistines, who are the affection of what is false, and the daughters of the uncircumcised, who are the affection of what is evil. The confirmed denial of what is true is meant by the daughters of the Philistines rejoicing, and the confirmed rejection of what is good is meant by the daughters of the uncircumcised triumphing. That the denial of the principles of truth and goodness in the understanding may not be confirmed in the affections of the will, is the Lord's desire, as expressed in David's wish. And as His love desires so does His providence operate to prevent men confirming their hearts in a state which cuts off the hope and almost the possibility of restoration.

There are two states of mind which, while they have an affinity, and one too often leads to the other, are yet to be distinguished. One state is that in which evil is loved and practised, while a belief in its sinfulness and a secret dread of its consequences remain. The other state is that in which the conviction of sin and the dread of its consequences have been overcome, and the affections rejoice and triumph over the defeat and death of those better thoughts and feelings that gave pain and created alarm. This is a state of confirmed unbelief and impenitence. The conflict is over ; the waning power of the good and true in the heart and mind has been overcome. The tidings have been told in Gath and published in the streets of Askelon, and the daughters of the Philistines rejoice, the daughters of the uncircumcised triumph. This is the state which Divine love desires to prevent, and against which Divine wisdom in all possible cases provides ; and to express which David by inspiration uttered the desire, "Tell it not in Gath."

But the high places themselves on which Saul and Jonathan were slain are made the subjects of an imprecation. "Ye mountains of Gilboa, let there be no dew, neither let there be rain, upon you, nor fields of offerings : for there the shield of the mighty is vilely cast away, the shield of Saul, *as though he had not been* anointed with oil." The consequence of evil is often in Scripture announced in the form of a malediction. Yet God is the author of no curse, but sin entails its own curse on those who commit it. In this case the imprecation is on the scene of the slaughter, and is in harmony with the economy of the Israelitish dispensation, that place should be an image of state.

The curse on the mountains of Gilboa is a description of the state of the heart or will, which mount Gilboa represents, when the truth and love of God are therein destroyed. The dew and the rain of heaven are celestial and spiritual truth, flowing into the inmost of the mind from the Lord out of heaven, and giving refreshment and fruitfulness. And the fields of offering are the good things of love and charity that are offered up to the Lord, as the fruits of His own free and bountiful gifts that have descended upon the humble and receptive mind.

But this also describes the condition of the mind when, the heart being turned away from God, the heaven of the spiritual mind is shut, and the Lord's doctrine no longer drops upon the natural mind like rain, and His Spirit no longer distils like dew and like small rain upon the tender grass ; but the mind becomes like a parched land not inhabited. When there is no spiritual love in the heart there is no saving truth in the understanding. There may be knowledge, but there is no wisdom ; there may be persuasion, but there is no faith.

A special reason that there might be no dew or rain on the mountains of Gilboa was, that there the shield of the mighty had been vilely cast away, the shield of Saul, as not anointed with oil. The shield of the mighty is vilely cast away when the truth that defends good is contemned and rejected, the shield of Saul, as not anointed with oil, is cast away, when truth is treated as if it had no relation to love, or when that relation is denied.

Thus far David, in his pathetic lamentation, speaks chiefly of the death of Saul and Jonathan as regarded by the Philistines. He next comes to speak of it in relation to the Israelitish people and to himself.

David had desired that the daughters of the Philistines might not rejoice over the death of Saul ; he now calls the daughters to weep for him. The daughters of Israel are the opposites of the daughters of the Philistines ; they are the affections of truth. They are exhorted to mourn the destruction of truth in the Church, and to mourn by weeping, for weeping is the symbol of sorrow because truth has perished.

But to apply this to the inward state of those who are passing through the trials of the spiritual life. There are states in Christian experience which are called states of desolation, when light and hope seem to have departed, and the delight of life seems to have died away. These are times of weeping. David describes these states from his own experience ; as in the sixth Psalm, "O Lord, rebuke me not in Thine anger, neither chasten me in Thy hot displeasure." Those whom the Lord loves He rebukes and chastens. But we must be not only the objects, but the subjects, of the Lord's love, before we can be chastened as children. And then the Psalmist describes his

distress under the Lord's rebuke and chastening : " I am weary with my groaning ; all the night make I my bed to swim ; I water my couch with my tears. Mine eye is consumed because of grief ; it waxeth old because of all mine enemies." This grief is made more poignant by the remembrance of the previous state of prosperity and enjoyment, as the daughters of Israel are called upon to weep for Saul, who had clothed and adorned them. This weeping, with the state of humiliation and godly sorrow which it implies, brings the suffering soul to the Lord. " In those days, and in that time, saith the Lord, the children of Israel shall come, they and the children of Judah together, going and weeping : they shall go, and seek the Lord their God " (Jer. l. 4). To those who thus mourn, though it be in sackcloth and ashes, the Lord will give beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness ; that they may be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that He may be glorified (Isa. lxi. 3).

It is natural that in David's lamentation over the slain on the mountains of Gilboa Jonathan should occupy a prominent place. " O Jonathan, thou wast slain in thine high places. I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan : very pleasant hast thou been unto me : thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women." Wonderful indeed was Jonathan's love for David. A worthy representative it was of love to the Lord, whom David represented, and of love for the truth which He taught. Under another view, it represented that love which is grounded in the harmony and unity which exist between the letter and the spirit of the Word ; that is, between the real truth of the letter and the pure truth of the spirit ; or, what is the same, between doctrine as drawn from the literal sense of the Word, and the essential principles of doctrine as contained in its spiritual sense. Combining these views we may be able to see more clearly and fully the truth and beauty of that seemingly hyperbolic tribute to Jonathan's love for David, that it surpassed the love of women.

There is one respect in which the love of man surpasses the love of woman. This has its ground in a constitutional difference in the mental character of the sexes ; and, in the highest degree of the regenerate and heavenly life, it becomes actual and obvious.

The masculine soul is love covered with wisdom, and the feminine soul is wisdom covered with love. As love in the man is inmost and wisdom is outermost, his love is deeper than his wisdom ; and as wisdom in the woman is inmost and love is outermost, her wisdom is deeper than her love. Masculine love is thus deeper or more interior than feminine love, as, on the other hand, feminine wisdom is deeper or more interior than masculine wisdom. Love being inmost in the man it is less perceptible, for it manifests itself in wisdom ; and the wisdom of the woman is less perceptible, because it manifests itself in

love. We say therefore that the man is wisdom and that the woman is love, because these are their outward and obvious characteristics. We say also that true marriage consists in the union of feminine love with masculine wisdom, because these are the outward and obvious qualities by which they are distinguished. But there is also a deeper and more interior, although less conscious or at least less sensible, union between those who are united in true conjugal love. Besides the union of feminine love with masculine wisdom, there is a union of feminine wisdom with masculine love ; or of the internal love of the man with the internal wisdom of the woman. This twofold union is strikingly exhibited in the heavens. In the spiritual heaven, where the spiritual or lower degree of the mind is opened, the husband is wisdom and the wife is love ; but in the celestial heaven, where the celestial or highest degree of the mind is opened, the husband is love and the wife is wisdom. In these two heavens we also see the different character of masculine and feminine wisdom exemplified. Masculine wisdom, being external, is rational wisdom ; feminine wisdom, being internal, is perceptive wisdom. Therefore in the spiritual heaven the angels reason, in the celestial heavens the angels perceive. In the celestial heaven it is yea, yea, nay, nay ; in the spiritual heaven there is something of the whatsoever is more than these, which cometh of evil. We observe this distinction between masculine and feminine wisdom, or between the masculine and feminine intellect, even in this world. We observe that men reason and that women perceive. We see also that the rational wisdom of the man is not communicable to the woman, and that the perceptive wisdom of the woman is not communicable to the man. But we see the Creator's wisdom and benevolence in these distinctive characteristics of the sexes, by which two souls, that can never in anything be the same, become more perfectly one than either of them apart could ever be. In true marriage there is the union of beauty and might, mental and physical ; and this marriage exists in its perfection with the angels in heaven.

Jonathan's love for David, as being wonderful and more than the love of women, represented that love for truth and wisdom, whose type David was, which is the primary love that lies at the root of human nature, and out of which all other loves spring, even the love of women, for the woman was taken out of the man.

It would have been interesting to notice the numerous pairs of expressions that occur in this beautiful elegy, which refer to what Clowes so often points out as pervading the Word, the marriage of the good and the true, or, in the opposite sense, of the evil and the false ; but this must be left to the reader.

David concludes, "How are the mighty fallen, and the weapons of war perished !" Fallen are the mighty when the heavenly principles

of love and charity are no longer the religion of the heart and life, and the weapons of war have perished when the truths of the Word have ceased to defend good against evil, and the conflict has ended in the extinction of spiritual life.

CHAPTER IV.

DAVID IN HEBRON ANOINTED KING OVER THE HOUSE OF JUDAH.

2 Samuel ii.

THE defeat of Israel and the death of Saul and his three sons in the battle of Jezreel, must have convinced David that the time was come when the anointing of Samuel, which had hitherto brought him nothing but trouble and anguish, would reward him for his sufferings by bringing him to the throne of Israel. He does not, however, betray any of the signs of human ambition, which most other men have manifested in similar circumstances. He does not follow the promptings of his own will, nor act on the dictates of his own judgment; nor does he ask counsel of flesh and blood; he inquires of the Lord, not whether he shall claim the vacant throne, but whether and to which of the cities of Judah he shall go up; and he is answered, "Go up unto Hebron."

Kirjath-arba, which is Hebron, had long been a distinctly representative, and had become even a sacred, place. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had dwelt there; and it had been appointed as a city of refuge and a Levitical city. Hebron represented the spiritual Church. One circumstance connected with its history gives it a double significance. When the Israelites came into Canaan, Hebron was possessed by the children of Anak. These were giants, and were like those who are spoken of as existing before the Flood (Gen. vi. 4). The nations of Canaan were the degenerate descendants of the people of the ancient Church, and of these the Anakim were the most corrupt; as the Nephilim, or giants, that lived immediately before the Flood, were the most corrupt of the degenerate descendants of the people of the most ancient Church. It was the fear of the sons of Anak that caused the children of Israel to wander forty years in the wilderness, and that excluded all the men from twenty years old and upwards from entering Canaan, except Caleb and Joshua (Num. xiv. 29, 30). When the spies who were sent to search the land, returned to the camp of Israel, one part of their evil report related to its gigantic inhabitants. "There we saw the giants, the sons of Anak, which come of the giants: and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their

sight." When the Israelites took possession of the land of Canaan, Hebron, the district inhabited by these giants, was appropriately given to Caleb (Josh. xiv. 13), who had brought up a good report of the land, and encouraged the children of Israel to go up at once and possess it (Num. xiii. 30).

When David was divinely directed to go to Hebron, it was on account of its representative character. In Hebron had dwelt those in whom the ancient Church had fallen into its deepest state of corruption; on account of which the inhabitants of Hebron were utterly destroyed by Joshua (Josh. x. 36, 37); and there David was commanded to go, to set up his kingdom, which was to represent the Lord's spiritual Church, that Church which the Lord established when He was upon earth; for the Christian Church was the ancient Church unswathed. To represent more expressively the establishment of the Church, it is recorded that David, when he went up thither, took with him his two wives, who represented the Church, as to the internal and external affection of truth, by which the spiritual Church is distinguished. His men also did David bring up, every man with his household; these representing all the truths of the Church, each united to its own good, with their derived thoughts and affections; those who are principled therein constituting the household of faith. David's men dwelt in the cities of Hebron. Thus the doctrines of the ancient Church, which these cities represented, after being purged of their errors and corruptions, became again the habitations of spiritual truth and goodness, which David's men and their families represented.

Not long after David's settlement in Hebron, "the men of Judah came, and there they anointed David king over the house of Judah." The tribe of Judah, which was the first, was for some time the only tribe that acknowledged David as king; we can hardly say, as the successor of Saul, for the men of Judah seem to have made no claim for David's sovereignty over the whole people. Yet rightly considered, he who was king of Judah was entitled to be the sovereign of all the tribes of Israel; for he who rules the highest should rule all below. Jesus was sought and worshipped by the wise men from the east as King of the Jews, and the King of the Jews was written as an accusation over His cross; but He was acknowledged also as the King of Israel.

The kingdom began under David as it ended under Rehoboam, by being divided into two, the kingdom of Judah and the kingdom of Israel, if we may call Ish-bosheth's reign a succession, which was rather a usurpation. The kingdom belonged to the Lord, and by His command David had been anointed king long before the death of Saul. David was therefore the rightful sovereign of the one kingdom. Still there was a deeper cause for, and there is a deeper meaning in, the divided state of the people than the letter of the Word reveals.

David, we have seen, was potentially king while Saul actually reigned; as, in an early stage of the regenerate life, "we delight in the law of God after the inward man: but we see another law in our members, warring against the law of our mind, and bringing us into captivity to the law of sin which is in our members." The state is now changed. The inward man reigns actually, but the outward man is not yet wholly subject to his government. The highest or inmost thoughts and affections of the natural mind have made a voluntary submission, or rather have given their joyful consent, to the supremacy and rule of the spiritual. The men of Judah have anointed David king, confirming Samuel's act by their own, and thus reciprocating the Divine love to them in their practical love to Him. Our Lord, as the anointed of Jehovah, though never anointed as an earthly king, had the precious ointment of grateful and adoring love poured upon His head (Matt. xxvi. 7), and even upon His feet (John xii. 3); acts appropriately done to Him, and done by loving women, who represented the Church, not only in general, but in particular, as it exists in the heart, when Jesus reigns there as King and Governor.

When the men of Judah came and anointed David king, they told him of the pious act of the men of Jabesh-gilead in burying Saul; and David sent messengers to bless them, and at the same time to ask their allegiance to him, now that Saul was dead. We have already remarked upon the burial of Saul as the type of resurrection; and it was fitting that this should be introduced here, seeing that the anointed, as buried in Saul, had risen in David. For, in resurrection, that which is raised is not the same as that which is sown; the life that is taken up is not the same as that which is laid down. The old dies, the new lives. David, as the anointed, was higher than Saul.

It does not, however, appear that the men of Jabesh acknowledged David as king. For it is immediately added, "But Abner the son of Ner, captain of Saul's host, took Ish-bosheth the son of Saul, and brought him over to Mahanaim; and made him king over Gilead, and over the Ashurites, and over Jezreel, and over Ephraim, and over Benjamin, and over all Israel." Mahanaim, which was on the other side Jordan, and not far from Jabesh, was the spot where Jacob, after parting with Laban, with whom he had entered into a covenant, was met by the angels of God. "And when Jacob saw them, he said, This is God's host; and he called the name of the place Mahanaim." This name means two camps, and these two camps signify both the heavens, or both the kingdoms of the Lord, the celestial and the spiritual; and in the supreme sense, the Divine celestial and the Divine spiritual of the Lord. Although in its after-history Mahanaim seems to have verified its name, its two camps were not always the camps of God, nor were angels always the hosts that encamped

therein. Mahanaim is connected, though not in the same manner, with two kingdoms, rivals to that of David. In Mahanaim Abner set up a rival king and kingdom to those of Judah; and to Mahanaim David himself came, when he fled before Absalom, on that unnatural son rebelling against his father, and attempting to wrest the kingdom from him (xvii. 24). In Israel there were at this time, therefore, two camps, but one of them was hostile to the other.

The subject treated of in the naming of Mahanaim is, the inversion of state, in which good obtains the first place and truth takes the second. Good has now obtained the first place, for the men of Judah have anointed David king of Judah; but truth has not yet submitted to the supremacy of good, for the rest of the tribes have not yet given David their allegiance. This is a state which has yet to be wrought out, but it is not to be effected without that internal conflict which is represented in the Word by war.

A singular and sanguinary conflict seems to have formed the commencement of the several years' war that was carried on between the house of David and the house of Saul. Abner, captain of his master's host, had gone to Gibeon, and was followed by Joab, captain of the host of David; and they met together on the opposite sides of the pool of Gibeon. "And Abner said to Joab, Let the young men now arise, and play before us. And Joab said, Let them arise." Twelve from each side met, "and they caught every one his fellow by the head, and thrust his sword in his fellow's side; so they fell down together: wherefore that place was called Helkath-hazzurim, which is in Gibeon." Had this encounter been the means of settling a question of right or even of might, there would have been less regret for the mutual slaughter, but it was only the initiative of a sore battle, in which David's men were victorious. We may be thankful that, as a part of Bible history, it contains another and higher meaning than that of the letter.

The pool of Gibeon, on the opposite sides of which the two little armies sat down, and across which their two leaders spoke to each other, is the type of one of those deep questions on which the men of the Church have long taken opposite sides, and over which they have proposed and accepted the challenge to decide the question by a gladiatorial display of intellectual skill. In Scripture pools signify intelligence derived from the knowledges of goodness and truth; for pools are there taken for collected waters or lakes, and collected waters or lakes are collected knowledges by which intelligence comes. Both from its situation and from the subject of the contest between the two camps, the intelligence which the pool of Gibeon represents, is that which relates to the question, whether goodness or truth, or, what is the same, whether charity or faith has the claim to priority, and is

entitled to take the first place. Those who maintain the priority and supremacy of charity are represented by the servants of David, while those who contend for the priority and supremacy of faith are represented by the servants of the son of Saul. "It has been a subject of controversy from the most ancient times whether priority and preference are due to charity or to faith. This controversy originated in the ignorance which prevailed of old, and which prevails at this day, concerning this truth, that one has only so much of faith as he has of charity, and that in the process of regeneration charity meets faith, or what is the same thing, good meets truth, insinuating into it all its particulars, and adapting itself thereto, and thus causing truth to be faith." "Those who are in truth before they are regenerate are always such that they believe truth to be both prior and superior to good, and so it appears at that time; but when truth is conjoined to good in their minds, or when they are regenerate, they see and perceive that truth is posterior and inferior, and then good in them has the dominion over truth. But as within the Church there are more unregenerate than regenerate men, and as the unregenerate judge from appearances, it has been a matter of dispute from ancient times whether priority belongs to truth or to good. With those who were not regenerated, and also with those who were not fully regenerated, the opinion prevailed that truth is prior; for as yet they had no perception of good, and so long as there is no perception of good, they must of necessity be in shade, or in ignorance on things of this nature. But those who are regenerate, because they are in essential good, are enabled, by virtue of the intelligence derived from it, to perceive what good is, and that it is from the Lord, and that it flows in through the internal man into the external, and this continually, man being entirely ignorant of it, and that it adjoins itself to the truths of doctrine which are in the memory, consequently that good in itself is prior, although it did not before appear to be so."

These states of thought in the Church, and these stages of the regenerate life, are strikingly represented in the state of the Israelitish people at the time of this meeting between Joab and Abner, when they were divided, the tribe of Judah, which represented charity or goodness, being on one side, and the rest of the tribes, which have more relation to truth and faith, being on the other. Yet, in reference to the regenerate this is a temporary state; for even in this stage the regenerate are progressing to one in which truth in them will be subordinate to goodness, as the tribes now under Saul are being brought, though by a painful experience, to unite with Judah in acknowledging the sovereignty of David. Their submission is to be brought about by conquest; and the singular and sanguinary scene enacted in the sight of the two contending parties is the beginning of the conflict.

And very expressive also of the nature and issue of the contest, in this its first stage, are the particulars of the conflict. The contest is at first a kind of intellectual sport, as the young men were to arise and play. The intellectual character of the contest is indicated by the number of combatants on either side. There are some numbers that have relation to good and some that have relation to truth. The number twelve has especial relation to truth, and generally means all the truths that enter into and constitute the faith of the Church, like the twelve tribes of Israel and the twelve apostles of the Lord. These are the intellectual combatants that are to contend for victory. They enter into the serious play of deadly strife. The contest is short and sharp, each man seizes his fellow by the head, and plunges his sword into his side. The head has a comprehensive meaning, but, in particular, it signifies the truth which a man believes to be truth, and which he makes the truth of his faith, for with man this constitutes the head, and is meant by the head in many parts of Scripture ; as in Isaiah, "The redeemed shall come to Zion with songs of joy upon their head" (Isa. xxxv. 10). As the head has relation to truth and faith, the side has relation to charity ; for there, where the combatants strike, is the region of the heart, which is the seat of life, and the symbol of love, which is life. Spiritual combatants lay hold of the head and thrust at the side, when they seize the faith and strike at the love of their opponents, and thus endeavour to subdue them through both the understanding and the will. But the singularity of this conflict is, that each combatant is victor and each is vanquished. The whole of the combatants are slain, they fall down together. A complete representative this of those intellectual and spiritual conflicts in which victory and defeat are common to both sides ; in which neither convinces the other, but each one believes that he wields the sword of truth, and inflicts a mortal wound upon the principles of the other. From the determined character of those who engaged in this conflict the place was called the field of strong men, to express the state of mind which such a deadly but indecisive trial of strength leaves behind it, each side equally strong in its own convictions.

But no momentous question can be allowed long to remain undecided, if the means exist by which it can be brought to a decision. The death of these combatants was the signal for a general engagement. "And there was a very sore battle that day ; and Abner was beaten, and the men of Israel, before the servants of David." This preponderance of power on David's side is representative of the beginning of that inversion of state which is to end in good being actually the first in the mind's estimation, and in the government of its thoughts and affections. And this also implies the ascendancy of the spiritual over the natural ; for the one state implies the other. So

far as we are naturally minded we give truth the first place and good the second, and even if we do not give truth the preference theoretically, we do it practically ; and only when we have become spiritual do we give a practical supremacy to good. In every regenerate mind, therefore, the conflict takes place which is to determine whether good or truth shall be the reigning power ; and only as we incline to the supremacy of goodness in our own hearts and lives does the cause of the right principle prosper and ultimately prevail.

When Abner was beaten he fled, and was pursued by a brother of Joab. As this flight and pursuit have important future consequences both to Abner and Joab, the captains of the opposing hosts, it is necessary carefully to consider it.

"There were three sons of Zeruiah there, Joab, and Abishai, and Asahel : and Asahel was as light of foot as a wild roe." Asahel pursued Abner, but Abner seems to have been nearly as light of foot as his pursuer. He not only kept in advance, but was able to look behind and warn Asahel of the danger to which he exposed himself in coming too near. "Howbeit he refused to turn aside : wherefore Abner with the hinder end of the spear smote him under the fifth rib, that the spear came out behind him; and he fell down there, and died in the same place." The three sons of Zeruiah represent, like all such combinations, the trine that makes complete unity; and as the last in every trine has reference to action, this is well represented by Asahel being light of foot. The wild roe, to whose fleetness that of Asahel is compared, expresses the character of the ultimate which he represented. In Jacob's last blessing on his sons, Naphtali is said to be a hind let loose ; and he represents the delight of the natural affections after temptations, when the affections, previously bound, are restored to a state of freedom. But Asahel is compared to a roe that has never been bound, but is in the enjoyment of its original wild freedom. He, therefore, represents that activity which springs from the impetuosity of the natural affections that have not been chastened by temptation. He receives his death-stroke in an unusual way indeed, from behind Abner, and by the hinder end of his spear ; but this shows his want of caution and experience, and it points out also the external means by which such a principle as that which Asahel represents may be overcome ; for behind and before mean what are relatively external and internal, obscure and clear. To be thus slain would be a reproach ; and the circumstance that "as many as came to the place where Asahel fell down and died stood still," may be considered to express mingled sorrow and regret that, in the warfare of the spiritual life, much zeal may be united with much indiscretion, and that a good cause may suffer loss from the well-intentioned but misdirected efforts of those who support it.

But Joab and Abishai continued the pursuit in which Asahel had failed ; "and the sun went down when they were come to the hill of Ammah, that lieth before Giah by the way of the wilderness of Gibeon." In the prosecution of the same object by the two higher faculties there is some degree of the union of what is good and true, and therefore of zeal and discretion, as effected by temptation, which was wanting in Asahel ; for they came to the hill Ammah, which means a beginning ; that lieth before Giah, which means breaking forth (of a fountain) ; by the way of the wilderness of Gibeon, which spiritually signifies temptation as to truth. But when they were come thus far the sun went down. Sunset is the end of a state of clear perception, and the beginning of a state of obscure perception, in regard to love and faith. In the present instance the state of clear perception had ended before the object of pursuit had been attained ; thus indicating a still undecided or indecisive state respecting the supremacy of good or of truth in the Church and kingdom of the Lord among and within men.

The state of undetermined supremacy is further described in the account which follows. The men of Benjamin, the tribe to which Saul belonged, and in whose land the combatants now were, "gathered themselves together after Abner, and became one troop, and stood on the top of an hill. Then Abner called to Joab, and said, Shall the sword devour for ever? Knowest thou not that it will be bitterness in the latter end? how long shall it be then, ere thou bid the people return from following their brethren? And Joab said, As God liveth, unless thou hadst spoken, surely then in the morning the people had gone up every one from following his brother." These leaders of the two opposite troops agreed to desist ; and they returned, one to Mahanaim, the other to Hebron. They seem to have been mutually impressed with a conviction that it was unbecoming to carry on a fratricidal war to determine whether one or both the kings should reign ; for this alternative seems to have entered into their calculations ; and this state of indecision may be referred to that higher sphere which this condition of the two parties represents.

Still, although the question of the kingship was as yet undecided, and both the leaders agreed for the time to desist, the advantage was on the side of David. Of David's servants only nineteen had fallen besides Asahel, but of Benjamin and the men of Abner three hundred and threescore had died. These numbers express not only the extent but the nature of the loss ; for three belongs to the spiritual class of numbers, and twenty to the celestial ; or, to truth and good respectively. Although, therefore, both sides suffered loss, the relative strength remaining was on the side of goodness as compared with truth, or of the inner as compared with the outer man. As regards

Asahel, they buried him in the sepulchre of his father which is in Bethlehem ; thus representing the rising into a new and higher life of that natural principle of which he was the expressive type.

CHAPTER V.

THE DEATH OF ABNER.

2 Samuel iii.

THE truce between Joab and Abner was but of short duration. At what time the conflict was renewed we do not learn ; but the third chapter opens with the statement, " Now there was long war between the house of Saul and the house of David : but David waxed stronger and stronger, and the house of Saul waxed weaker and weaker." There were no doubt many conflicts, but they are left unrecorded. In the progress of the regenerate life there are temptation-conflicts that do not belong so much to our outward as to our inward experience. Not all are inscribed on the natural memory, but the issues of all are inscribed on the spiritual memory, the book of life, out of which all are to be judged. Our Lord was engaged during His whole life in conflicts with the powers of darkness, in which He passed alternately through states of *exinanition* and glorification ; so that He waxed stronger and stronger, and the opposing power waxed weaker and weaker. Yet all that we read of in the Gospels are His temptations in the wilderness, and those in Gethsemane and on the cross. So with the Christian disciple who follows his Master and Lord. His record is on high ; and to know and rejoice that his name is written in heaven, is to him more than to know and rejoice that the spirits are subject unto him. This is to know that the government of the natural is waxing weaker and weaker, and the government of the spiritual is waxing stronger and stronger ; that religion is becoming more and more of the heart, and less and less of the intellect : not that religion loses any of its intellectual interest, but it is regarded, even on its intellectual side, more for the good which it leads us to do than for the truth which it requires us to believe.

The progress of this inversion of state, by which good obtains the ascendancy, is attended with an increase of the graces, or of the spiritual affections and thoughts, that enrich the mind, so far as religion comes to be a vital principle that moves the heart, still more than a system of doctrine that convinces the understanding. This is expressed in the series of events in this inspired record. Immediately after saying that David waxed and the house of Saul waned, the

sacred writer relates that "unto David were sons born in Hebron." He mentions six sons born of as many different mothers. These sons spiritually understood, are true thoughts born of good affections. They are six in number, to express the idea that true thoughts from good affections are not produced without labour and sorrow, a meaning which this number has acquired from the six days of labour that precede the Sabbath of rest, these natural days representing spiritual states through which the regenerate pass in their progress towards the heavenly state of spiritual and eternal rest.

But the true thoughts, or the spiritual perceptions of truth, which are thus born in the mind through labour and travail, which are states of spiritual conflict, become in their turn the means by which falsities and evils are resisted and overcome. Therefore children, or sons, are said to be "as arrows in the hand of a mighty man. Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them : they shall not be ashamed, but they shall speak with the enemies in the gate" (Ps. cxxvii. 4, 5). The gate, in which are the enemies with whom the sons of youth shall speak, is the rational mind which communicates between the spiritual and the natural : and the enemies in the gate are the evils of the natural mind that resist the good of the spiritual mind in its effort to flow down into and unite the truths of the lower mind to itself. The sons that are as arrows in the hand of a mighty man, are, specifically, rational truths which have a spiritual origin ; and these, when wielded by the power of internal or spiritual goodness, which is the hand of the mighty, are instrumental in removing the evils that rise up in rebellion against good, which desires to rule, only that, by establishing order, it may produce concord and happiness.

A way was now opened for the reconciliation of the two conflicting elements, and for bringing the whole under the dominion of the rightful power, which was hardly to be expected, but which is not unusual in similar, and therefore in corresponding, circumstances. Abner, who had made himself strong for the house of Saul, was accused by his master of going in to one of Saul's concubines. This would have been practically making a claim to Saul's throne, and would have represented the adulteration of the good of natural truth. This charge Abner indignantly denied ; and he threatened to "translate the kingdom from the house of Saul, and to set up the throne of David over Israel and over Judah, from Dan even to Beer-sheba." In conformity with this threat, Abner "sent messengers to David, saying, Whose is the land ? saying also, Make thy league with me, and, behold, my hand shall be with thee, to bring about all Israel unto thee." David accepted the offer, but attached to it a singular condition. "Thou shalt not see my face, except thou first bring Michal, Saul's daughter." David sent messengers to Ish-bosheth to demand his wife, and Ish-

bosheth sent and took her from her husband, Phaltiel, the son of Laish. There is something remarkable in these circumstances. David refuses to see Abner, who offers him a kingdom, unless he bring with him Michal, David's first wife. Yet David himself demands her of Ish-bosheth, who delivers her to Abner, and thus becomes the means of effecting his own overthrow. Ish-bosheth feared Abner, and it is evident he also feared David; and although he may not have been aware of the league that had been made between them, he must have seen the danger of sending the leader of his army to restore Michal to David in Hebron. But these circumstances were divinely ordered or permitted for higher than historical purposes. Michal was to be the medium through whom the kingdom of Saul was to be united to the kingdom of David. We do not say, by whom the house of Saul was to be united to the house of David; for, as we shall see, Michal did not effect this higher union. The daughter of Saul may not have had any direct personal influence in bringing over the tribes; but she represents the affection by which the internal and external are brought together in order that they may become one. Therefore, as Saul had taken Michal from David and given her to Phaltiel, the son of Saul took her from Phaltiel and restored her to David. Abner was the instrument, Michal was the medium. He is the truth, she is the good, by which spiritual Israel is united to Judah under the rule of David's Lord.

An affecting scene is recorded in connection with these events. When Ish-bosheth sent and took Michal from Phaltiel, "her husband went with her along weeping behind her to Bahurim." It is pleasing to find in the tender affection of Phaltiel a worthy exception to the unfeeling character of the times, which could tolerate the separation, in the easiest manner possible, of a wife from her husband. Michal had for the second time been thus disposed of; and as she loved David, she may not have felt grieved at being parted from Phaltiel. There is nothing recorded respecting Phaltiel which can account for Saul having given him Michal while she was the wife of David. We only know him as the son of Laish, the lion, a name which he may have obtained for his prowess, although he has left no memorial of his feats of strength.

Saul both gave Michal and took her away, not from love but from hatred of David, and not to aid but to injure him. Yet Saul's wrath even in this was turned to David's praise. To see his wife given to another must have added to his anguish of spirit, yet it creates no bitterness of temper towards him who had so outraged his feelings as a husband. But the time of separation must have been a time of trial for Michal as well as for David, and their reunion must have been gratifying to both; and represents the conjunction of truth in the

spiritual mind with the affection of truth in the natural mind, which serves as a medium of connection and conjunction between the spiritual and the natural.

But that which was a time of rejoicing to David was a time of sorrowing to Phaltiel. All separations are sorrowful. But they may be profitable nevertheless. If we may judge by a Hebrew sign, the husband of Michal had passed into a higher state by his union with her. When Michal was given to him he was Phalti, when separated from him he was Phaltiel. As the letter *h*, which changed Abram into Abraham, and Sarai into Sarah, was taken from the Divine name Jehovah; the letters *el*, which changed Phalti into Phaltiel, formed the Divine name El, or were taken from Elohim. Jehovah may be called the Lord's Divine-celestial name, Elohim His Divine-spiritual name. Those to whose names *el* is added, from being natural become spiritual, and those to whose names *h* has been added, from being spiritual become celestial. Those who received such names at their birth belong respectively to the spiritual and the celestial class. We mean of course representatively. But Phaltiel went on weeping after Michal till he came to Bahurim, when Abner commanded him to return. This Benjaminite city, which was not far from Jerusalem, has its name from a root which signifies to prove, to choose, to love. It was the scene of transactions differing widely in character, but having one feature in common. Shimei there cursed David when flying from Absalom (xvi. 5), and there Hushai's messengers to David were concealed in a well when pursued by Absalom's men (xvii. 17). In these three instances, the only ones in which the place is mentioned, the circumstances that occurred were such as severely to try, and therefore to prove, men. David endured his trial meekly, and Phaltiel quietly submitted to the harsh mandate of the rough soldier.

Abner came to Hebron with a retinue of twenty men, and he was prepared to say to David, "I will arise and go, and will gather all Israel unto my lord the king, that they may make a league with thee, and that thou mayest reign over all that thine heart desireth. And David sent Abner away; and he went in peace." No sooner had Abner departed, than Joab returned from pursuing a troop, and laden with spoil. Hearing that Abner had been to Hebron, and that David had taken him into his favour, he came to the king, and reproached him with having sent away in peace one who had only come as a spy. Joab then sent messengers after Abner, who brought him again from the well of Sirah. "And when Abner was returned to Hebron, Joab took him aside in the gate to speak with him quietly, and smote him there under the fifth rib, that he died, for the blood of Asahel his brother." When David heard of this treacherous deed, he declared himself and his kingdom guiltless of the blood of Abner, and pronounced a

malediction on Joab and on all his father's house. Abner was buried in Hebron, and David gave him all the honours of a princely funeral. He himself followed the bier, and wept at the grave, and lamented over Abner; and said, "Died Abner as a fool dieth? Thy hands were not bound, nor thy feet put into fetters: as a man falleth before wicked men, so fellest thou. And all the people wept again over him." David fasted till the sun went down. And the king said unto his servants, "Know ye not that there is a prince and a great man fallen this day in Israel? And I am this day weak, though anointed king; and these men the sons of Zeruiah be too hard for me: the Lord shall reward the doer of evil according to his wickedness."

In order to understand the spiritual meaning of the transactions recorded in this chapter, and in some others as well, we must consider what Joab and Abner, the two leaders of the opposing forces, who play no unimportant parts in this history, represent.

In early times, the king was the leader of his army as well as the ruler of his people. One, if not the chief, object for which the Israelites desired a king was, that he might go out before them, and fight their battles. And when Samuel told the people the manner of the king that would reign over them, he spoke of his appointing captains over thousands and over fifties, but said nothing of his placing a leader over the whole army. The general of the army, therefore, when he took the place of the king, was his lieutenant in a stricter sense than an officer of the same rank is now. Both Joab and Abner were, moreover, related to the kings whom they served. Joab was the nephew of David (1 Sam. xxvi. 6), and Abner was the cousin of Saul (xiv. 47). Joab was related to David on the mother's side, Zeruiah being the sister of David; Abner was related to Saul on the father's side, Ner being the uncle of Saul.

While both of these generals were related to the kings whom they served, they yet represented principles that perform a temporary use, and are removed when that use has been performed. Abner did not long survive the reign of Saul, and Joab did not long survive the reign of David. Both of them committed the same error. Abner, on the death of Saul, took up the cause of Ish-bosheth against David; and Joab, on the death of David, took up the cause of Adonijah against Solomon. That is to say, they both adhered to the natural line, one by heredity, the other by primogeniture; one ignoring the Divine appointment of David through Samuel, the other the Divine appointment of Solomon through David. Both died a violent death. Joab killed Abner to avenge the death of Abishai, and Solomon killed Joab to avenge the death of Abner. One was slain in the gate, the other at the altar.

One other particular which broadens the basis of the spiritual sense

of the history of these two leaders, is the signification of their names. Ab, which means father, enters into both ; but the termination of one name means light or a lamp, and the beginning of the other means Jehovah. Abner thus signifies father of light, and Joab means Jehovah my father ; and light signifies truth, and the Divine name Jehovah signifies good.

Now there are two classes of men, one in whom the will, the other in whom the understanding, is the more active and the ruling power. This difference between Joab and Abner may be seen in their personal as well as in their typical character. Joab acts more from the deep and sometimes malignant feelings of the heart ; Abner more from the dictates of the understanding. Joab is by no means deficient in intelligence, but his understanding is more under the control of his will than his will is under the control of his understanding. There is, therefore, a duplicity of character in Joab, which indicates, intellectually, more of the wisdom of the serpent than the harmlessness of the dove. Abner's character indicates more intellectual control, and more singleness of mind, perhaps also more of the harmlessness of the dove than the wisdom of the serpent.

Joab's characteristics show him to represent the rational mind not yet under the control of the spiritual. It is very significant that Joab and his brothers are always spoken of as the sons of Zeruiah, the sister of David. A sister, as we have seen from Abraham and Isaac calling their wives their sisters, signifies rational truth, or rather the affection of rational truth. The three sons of Zeruiah are the truths born of this affection ; for the rational, like the spiritual and the natural, is inner, middle, and outer. This affection and its truths differ from those represented by Hagar and Ishmael, as the affection of understanding differs from the affection of knowing. The affection of rational truth is, indeed, the affection of understanding truth rationally. As, to understand is greater than to know, so much greater is its responsibility ; and as it gives the faculty and the means of rising higher, so does it of sinking lower. Joab exhibits examples of both. The downward tendency in him prevails. And as he who understands the truth can profane it ; so Joab, in slaying Abner without just cause and by deceit, commits the sin of profanation, and brings upon himself and upon his father's house the curse which that sin incurs, and from the blood-guiltiness of which there is no refuge, even in the sanctuary of God, and at the horns of the altar.

But Abner, what of him ? He, as the servant of Saul and the supporter of Ish-bosheth, is possessed of the lower gift of knowing ; therefore he is less capable of so deeply sinning, and more capable of readily repenting. It is true he turns to David because his master had offended him, but the offence shows that his master was unde-

‘serving of his support ; therefore he turned from the false to the true.

But besides going over to David himself, he had communicated with the elders of Israel and spoken to the men of Benjamin, whom he found willing to acknowledge David as their king. It would appear from this as if the kingdom was about to be transferred, peaceably and at once, from the house of Saul to the house of David, and that Joab’s jealousy alone frustrated Abner’s good intention and well-devised scheme. But in the ways of God there is permission as well as provision ; and this is no doubt to be regarded as the law under which both Abner and his master were taken out of the way, that the tribes of Israel might, of their own free-will and independent action, come to seek David as their king. This does not exonerate those who did the evil. God does not prompt men to sin ; but neither does He forcibly restrain them. Law and conscience are the bonds of His controlling providence ; and when men break these, they run into punishment, which is also permitted as a means of correction, and if possible of improvement. The evil were not withheld from compassing the death of the Lord Himself, and even the treacherous kiss of Judas was permitted to pollute the sinless lips of the Son of Man. These deeds were mourned over, and those who committed them are justly held in execration ; and yet they were permitted as necessities, for the sake of the end of which they were the means—the means of effecting that death, which was to be the gate to everlasting life. Might not, on the same principle, the death of Abner, and even of Ish-bosheth, be a necessary sacrifice, though done by treacherous and bloody men, who neither desired nor intended the end to which their cruel deeds contributed ? And might not these men be representative and their acts significative in that history, all whose parts were ensamples, written for our admonition ? Judas was a disciple, and yet he was a traitor. Joab was David’s servant, and yet he slew a confiding man, whom his master had dismissed with favour. The rational can act against as well as with the spiritual, which it is its true office to serve and obey ; but even its contrary acts may become channels of usefulness.

David, however, justly mourned over Abner’s death ; and what is more, he made Joab himself mourn. “ And David said to Joab, and to all the people that were with him, Rend your clothes, and gird you with sackcloth, and mourn before Abner.” Joab’s mourning may have had little sincerity to commend it, but the outward and visible act is that which represents ; and the concurrent mourning of all concerned, from the king downwards, expresses the concurrent action of all the thoughts and affections of the mind in expressing godly sorrow for the commission of an ungodly deed. In the obsequies which they paid the slain hero, “ king David himself followed the bier. And they buried

Abner in Hebron : and the king lifted up his voice, and wept at the grave of Abner ; and all the people wept." As burial is the symbol of resurrection, Abner's being buried in Hebron tells us that the natural truth, which he represented, is raised into a spiritual state, when it has once acknowledged the sovereignty of spiritual truth, however unreal it may have been to the rational, when acting from its own views and impulses. Abner had not, it is true, carried his purpose into effect. But this he would no doubt have done had he been allowed to return to his own land. He had the will, but he was deprived of the opportunity of bringing it into action. He was not like those who have the will with the opportunity, thus showing that they have not, but only suppose they have, the performing will.

At the grave the king lamented over Abner, and said, "Died Abner as a fool dieth? Thy hands were not bound, nor thy feet put into fetters : as a man falleth before wicked men, so fellest thou." David had lamented over Saul, now he laments over Saul's general. Saul had been slain by the enemy, Abner had fallen by the hand of an ostensible friend. Neither foolish nor bound, he died as if he had been both a fool and in fetters. Wisdom and power, with the freedom to use them, are no protection against treachery. But in Scripture, a fool is not so much a weak as a worthless or wicked person ; and such a one may require restraint, and even deserve death, which, we have seen, overtook Nabal. Abner was not such a one, and yet he suffered an inglorious death. But what does this lamentation of David teach us in its inner meaning? In Saul's death, David lamented the fall, in the Church, of Divine truth, which, as the anointed king of Israel, he represented. In the death of Abner he laments the fall of a primary truth, which is the same truth in a lower form and active state, as represented by Abner. Therefore David said to his servants, "Know ye not that there is a prince and a great man fallen this day in Israel?" For a prince means a primary or principal truth, which is subordinate to and rules under the highest. In espousing and maintaining the cause of Ish-bosheth, Abner became the support of Saul's house and throne. When he transferred his allegiance to David, he virtually became a support of the house and throne of David ; and had he lived, he would have become so actually. Partly at least on this account, after saying of Abner, that a prince and a great man had fallen in Israel, David added, "And I am this day weak, though anointed king." But this weakness arose also, and perhaps still more, from the deed of Joab, as calculated to bring discredit on himself and his kingdom, although he had washed his hands of the guilt. "And these men the sons of Zeruiah," he concludes, "be too hard for me : the Lord shall reward the doer of evil according to his wickedness." When the inward

man fails to find support in the outward man, whether it be from want of correspondence on the part of the rational or the natural, he is, in that state, as David was in that day, weak, though anointed king. Faith imbued with love may be the ruling principle in the inward man; but the inward man is but weak, and feels his own weakness, whenever the outward man refuses to act in harmony with him, much more when he acts against him. For the outward man is not, strictly speaking, an agent, but a reagent; he does not act but reacts; for all the power of acting comes from within. But the outward man can react against, as well as with, the inward man; he can use the power with which he is continually supplied to work his own will instead of that of his master. It is the same with man himself in relation to the Lord. Man is not, strictly speaking, an agent but a reagent. The Lord is the only agent throughout this universe; all created things and beings are but reagents. Yet man, although he has all his power, as he has his life, from God, can react against Him. He can use his God-given power to do his own will, instead of the Divine will. He has rationality and liberty, without which he would not be human, and the existence of these implies the power of judging and choosing, and therefore of acting, as if the power were his own, as it virtually, though not actually, is.

It seems remarkable that David should so bitterly complain that the sons of Zeruiah were too hard for him, and yet show no intention or even desire to remove them from a position they had misused. It may be thought they were too powerful to lose as friends and encounter as enemies. The higher reason is, that the sons of Zeruiah had a representative use to perform. That rationality which they represented is not to be rejected, even when it reacts against the higher perceptions of the mind, until the stage of the regenerate life to which it belongs is completed, and the state is perfected. When good takes the place of truth, when Solomon reigns instead of David, its end will have come. Then JEHOVAH will reward the doer of evil according to his wickedness. Not the anointed but the anointer is he who rewards such wickedness; not the Divine truth but the Divine good is that which removes such capability from the sphere of mental activity and bodily action. Now, the inversion of state is only going on. When that is completed, and good reigns, it will cast out all that offends.

CHAPTER VI.

THE DEATH OF ISH-BOSHETH.

2 Samuel iv.

IT is not surprising that "when Saul's son heard that Abner was dead in Hebron, his hands were feeble, and all the Israelites were troubled." It would appear from this that Ish-bosheth was not aware that the captain of his army had made a league with David, to bring all Israel under his rule. Adversity brought effects, not unusual in rude and warlike nations, in the affairs and fortunes of Ish-bosheth ; it shook the stability of his kingdom, and raised up unscrupulous and deadly enemies against him in his own camp. Two brothers, that were captains of bands, Baanah and Rechab, went, and came about the heat of the day to the house of Ish-bosheth, who lay on his bed in his bedchamber ; and they slew him, and cut off his head. This they brought unto David at Hebron, and said to the king, "Behold the head of Ish-bosheth the son of Saul thine enemy, which sought thy life ; and the Lord hath avenged my lord the king this day of Saul, and of his seed." Instead of commending or rewarding them, David ordered them to be slain ; and the young men who slew them cut off their hands and their feet, and hanged them over the post of Hebron. But they took the head of Ish-bosheth, and buried it in the sepulchre of Abner in Hebron.

It is always painful to read of the sufferings and fate of the unfortunate, especially when brought upon them by those whom "their former bounty fed." But history records too many instances of this to make it a matter of surprise, as it is of regret. Yet even here we are to recognise a permissive Providence. The Creator of all worlds is this Disposer of all events. His presence and power, which are necessary to the subsistence and order of all things, and without which this glorious universe would resolve itself into chaos, are equally necessary to preserve and ordinate the moral world. Unless the providence of the Lord over the states and concerns of men were as minute as the beautiful analogy suggests, that the very hairs of their head are all numbered, and that a sparrow falls not to the ground without their Father in heaven, the moral world would fall into utter confusion and ruin. True it is that the Divine will is not done in all the actions of men ; yet that will is ever active, working out, through the human mind and in human affairs, the greatest possible amount of good and measure of happiness for each one and for the whole of the human race. The Divine

is present in the minutest particulars of human thought and affection, influencing where it cannot inspire, controlling where it cannot guide ; while all angels and spirits are employed as agents, and men and circumstances are brought to act as far as possible, in furtherance of the one purpose of the Divine Father, in the creation and government of the world, to make men holy and thence happy. A Being who is eternal must have eternal ends in view. Therefore much of human experience in this world is permitted for the sake of life in the world to come.

In sacred history, where we see as much of the dark, with more of the bright side of human nature than in the histories of the world, we find it placed in the light of Divine truth, and thus in the light of Divine and not merely of human judgment. In Scripture the actions and experience of men are not recorded for information merely or even chiefly, but for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. But besides all the doctrine and instruction that can be drawn from the sacred history, as history, we can now, by the law of spiritual interpretation, see in it a higher doctrine and purer instruction, enabling us to drink at the upper as well as the nether springs of revealed truth.

In the historical events of this part of the Word we see, especially, in the character and conduct of the two barbarous brothers, the character and operations of the unregenerate natural mind, both as to will and understanding. Their cruel deed exemplifies as well as represents the character of the natural man. One of the characteristics of natural-minded men is their instability. They are the people who change with circumstances. Having no inward principle to guide them, they go with the stream, and can be as zealous in destroying, as they had been in preserving, the idol of their worship. When the will and understanding are united in the pursuit of a selfish object, no deed is too dark, no means too unscrupulous. The two Benjamites went into the house of Ish-bosheth as though they would fetch wheat—as though they were pursuing good when they were hasting to do evil, seeking to promote life when they were eager to destroy it. Ish-bosheth “lay on his bed in his bedchamber, and they smote him, and slew him, and beheaded him, and took his head, and gat them away through the plain all night.” When evil and falsehood penetrate into the interior of the human mind, where life reposes, or seeks repose, after the toils and anxieties of its active state, they take that life away, so far as it has been the life of goodness and truth ; and severing the inner from the outer part of that which they have already slain, they get them away with it through the plain in the darkness of night. This plain is in the mind itself, and the night is a state of the

mind. Plains, in Scripture, signify planes in the mind. These two words in our language have the same origin, and express nearly the same idea, but the idea, and not merely the word, forms the ground of the meaning. "With man there are two planes, on which the celestial and spiritual principles from the Lord are founded. One is interior, the other is exterior. The planes themselves are conscience. The interior plane, or interior conscience, is where genuine goodness and truth are, for goodness and truth flowing in from the Lord constitute its active power. The exterior plane is the exterior conscience, and is where justice and equity, in the proper sense, are, for what is just and equitable, moral and civil, which also flow in, constitute its active power. There is also an outermost plane, which appears as conscience, but is not conscience. It does what is equitable and just for the sake of self and the world, or for the sake of self-honour or reputation, of worldly possessions, and through fear of the law." This last plane is that which exists in the minds of the wicked. It is the plain through which those represented by Baanah and Rechab pass in the night, when darkness is sought to cover deeds of darkness, and hide it even from themselves.

David, to whom the slayers of Ish-bosheth presented his head, as an offering intended to secure his favour, shows the true nobility which marked his conduct on other similar occasions, when his interest would have prompted him to act a less generous part. He said to them, "When one told me, saying, Behold, Saul is dead, thinking to have brought good tidings, I took hold of him, and slew him in Ziklag, who thought that I would have given him a reward for his tidings: how much more, when wicked men have slain a righteous person in his own house upon his bed? Shall I not therefore now require his blood of your hand, and take you away from the earth? And David commanded his young men, and they slew them, and cut off their hands and their feet, and hanged them up over the pool in Hebron. But they took the head of Ish-bosheth, and buried it in the sepulchre of Abner in Hebron." Those mutilations which were practised so much by ancient nations, when recorded in the Word are representative of the effects of evil. The hands and the feet, as the members by which the power of the body operates, or by which, roughly speaking, we work and walk, correspond to the ultimate powers of the mind by which the will and the understanding act. When the evil are such that "the act of violence is in their hands, and their feet run to evil, and they make haste to shed innocent blood" (Isa. lix. 6, 7), they lose the power of doing good. We see in this the judgment of Divine truth, which returns the evil done upon the evil-doer, according to the eternal law of retribution, that as a man sows so also shall he reap.

CHAPTER VII.

DAVID IS ANOINTED KING OVER ISRAEL, AND GOES UP AGAINST
JERUSALEM.

2 *Samuel* v. 1-5.

ISH-BOSHETH reigned two years ; but it was not till five years after his death that David was anointed king over Israel. What government prevailed among the eleven tribes between the death of Saul's son and the commencement of David's reign, we do not learn. It would probably resemble that which existed during the time of the judges, when there was no king in Israel, and every man did that which was right in his own eyes. The tribes had no doubt come to feel the necessity of a more stringent rule. They came to David of their own accord. It is indeed remarkable that David seems to have taken no measures to bring the eleven tribes under his dominion. It was no doubt right that they should come and offer him their voluntary homage. The Lord came to establish a kingdom, but He never employed force to bring men into it. He requires the free reciprocation of His love ; for only in freedom can men be ruled to their advantage.

When the tribes of Israel came to David they said, " Behold, we are thy bone and thy flesh. ' Also in time past, when Saul was king over us, thou wast he that leddest out and broughtest in Israel : and the Lord said to thee, Thou shalt feed My people Israel, and thou shalt be a captain over Israel. So all the elders of Israel came to the king to Hebron ; and king David made a league with them in Hebron before the Lord : and they anointed David king over Israel." This is an accurate description of the Lord Jesus. He is our bone and our flesh, in being clothed with humanity, which, though glorified in Him, is not less akin to us. Nay, it is nearer to us than it was when yet unglorified. For that humanity in which all the fulness of the Godhead dwells, is life itself, and enters as a living principle into all that is human in us : nay, it is the origin of all that is truly human in human minds ; for no one is truly man but he in whom is an image of the Divine man. It is no less accurate a description of David's Lord that He feeds His people, and is a captain over them. He leads them to the green pastures and beside the still waters, and defends them against, and even prepares a table before them in the presence of, their enemies.

The league which the Lord makes with His people is the agreement

which rests upon conditions—conditions of support and protection on His part, and of fidelity and obedience on theirs. This league is made before Jehovah, when the Church acknowledges the Divinity of the Lord in His Humanity. And the Church anoints the Lord King over Israel, when the love she has received from the Lord is returned to Him again, and there is reciprocal conjunction between the Lord and His people.

When all Israel had thus voluntarily placed themselves under the rule of David, and formed one united kingdom under one king, a new capital was to be provided by the king more suitable to his enlarged dominions.

Jerusalem was inhabited by the Jebusites, one of the seven nations of Canaan that were devoted to the sword. In the division of the land it fell to the lot of Benjamin (Josh. xviii. 28). The king of Jerusalem was one of the five kings who fought against Joshua on that memorable day when the sun stood still (Josh. x. 5). So powerful were the Jebusites, the inhabitants of Jerusalem, aided no doubt by the strength of the place, that neither the children of Judah nor the children of Benjamin could drive them out, but the Jebusites dwelt with them “unto this day” (Josh. xv. 63 ; Judges i. 21). The reduction of the stronghold of the Jebusites was reserved for David, nor did he attempt it till backed by the whole force of Israel. And when the king went up against Jerusalem, the Jebusites, as we shall see, felt so perfectly secure, that they mocked at the very idea of his seriously attempting to force his way into their impregnable fortress. In all this there is of course a higher meaning. It is, in one of its applications, part of a large and comprehensive subject, and one of the mysteries of the kingdom that could only have been known by what may be called a revelation.

The whole history of the Israelites, from the time of Moses to the reign of Solomon, is, in the internal sense, a history of the Lord’s work of redemption, in regard to its effects in the spiritual world. There, we know, judgment is effected, and a new heaven is formed, preparatory to the establishment of a new Church upon earth. The plagues of Egypt, by which the Israelites were separated from the Egyptians, describe the process and progress of judgment, by which the good were severed from the evil in the world of spirits. The Red Sea signifies that hell into which the wicked, who were represented by the Egyptians, were cast, and through which the righteous, represented by the Israelites, passed in safety. The forty years’ journey through the wilderness describes the temptations through which the redeemed passed before they could enter heaven. And this reveals a most important fact relating to those who had lived in the world from the fall of the celestial Church to the time of the Lord’s Advent. It is the common belief of Christians, that there was no salvation for the fallen

race of man but through Jesus Christ; and that His atonement included past sins as well as future offences. But the important question is, How was this effected? We know the common opinion. Christ, it is held, suffered for the sins of all men from the time of the Fall; and those "who died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off," were saved, "being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past" (Rom. iii. 24, 25). We share in the common belief in the efficacy of our Lord's redemption. We believe, however, that sins can only be remitted by being removed. And it is a vital question, how the sins committed before the Lord's coming could be removed by what the Lord did and suffered in the flesh.

The work of salvation consists of two parts, reformation and regeneration. All who are reformed in the world are ultimately saved; for those who in the natural world have shunned evils as sins can be imbued with good in the spiritual world. Before the Lord's coming men could be reformed in the world, but they could not be regenerated. Regeneration cannot be effected without temptation. And until the Lord had conquered hell and glorified His humanity, no one could undergo temptation; therefore none were admitted into a trial in which none could have stood. Yet without regeneration there is no salvation, therefore no heaven. How then was the salvation of those who died in faith provided for? All who had passed through the first stage of the new life, and were thus capable of passing through the second, were reserved in the intermediate state, or world of spirits, until the Lord's coming. And when the Lord had overcome hell and glorified His humanity, then could the faithful in the world of spirits pass through the corresponding process, and be regenerated as He had been glorified. He being perfected through suffering could succour them that were tempted (Heb. iii. 18). The temptations which the faithful underwent in the middle state, were represented by the trials which the children of Israel endured in the middle region between Egypt and Canaan, the waste and howling wilderness. And by this means they realized the promise, and had remission of sins that were past. They had been carried in the womb; now they were born—born from above although with trouble and anguish. For the Church, as the mother of the faithful, had been in that state described by the prophet: "The children are come to the birth, and there is not strength to bring forth" (Isa. xxxvii. 3). The faithful, new-born, were prepared to enter into heaven, as the Israelites, after their weary pilgrimage, were to enter into the Promised Land.

Regarding Canaan as the type of heaven, the eternal home of the

faithful, there is one important circumstance connected with it, which seems to make it anything but an image of that place where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest. It is inhabited by wicked nations, which have to be driven out before Israel can find it a quiet habitation. But this otherwise inexplicable circumstance is explained in the Writings, and in such a way as to make the whole history of Israel a consistent and continuous history of the great work of human redemption. "Before the Lord's coming into the world, that region of heaven to which the spiritual were afterwards raised, was occupied by evil spirits and genii; for before the Lord's coming, a great part of them roamed at large, and infested the good, especially the spiritual, who were in the lower earth; but after the Lord's coming they were all thrust down into their hells, and that region was delivered, and given for an inheritance to those of the spiritual Church." These were like the imaginary heavens spoken of in connection with the Lord's Second Advent, and which were abolished by the judgment which then took place.

When we know that the evil spirits and genii who occupied that region of heaven which was afterwards given as an eternal inheritance to the spiritual, were represented by the nations of Canaan, we can see the reason why none of them were completely conquered by Joshua, by the Judges, or even by Saul, but that their final and complete overthrow or subjugation should be reserved for David, who especially represented the Lord as Divine truth, and who, as such, conquered death and hell, and went and preached to the spirits in prison, delivering men on earth and the faithful in Hades from the captivity in which they had for ages been held by the powers of darkness.

David is now leading Israel, as the Lord led the faithful, to take the kingdom of heaven by force. But the account of this we reserve for another chapter.

CHAPTER VIII.

DAVID TAKES THE STRONGHOLD OF ZION.

2 Samuel v. 6-10.

As the capital of the kingdom is now to be transferred from Hebron to Jerusalem, a few remarks on this may be offered. Hebron was nearer to the borders of Canaan than Jerusalem; and represented a more exterior part of that region of heaven which was given to the spiritual; and also the Church in a less interior state. The removal

of the kingdom from Hebron to Jerusalem represented therefore the exaltation of the spiritual in the other life, and of the Lord's love and truth in the mind, by which their dominion becomes more perfect and extensive.

In the first ^{as} in the second seat of David's kingdom there is a duality, which is expressive of that distinction which was represented by Jerusalem and Zion. It is sometimes spoken of as Kirjath-Arba, which is Hebron. And Kirjath-Arba and Hebron, like Jerusalem and Zion, signify the two principles of truth and good which unitedly enter into the kingdom and government of the Lord, whether they are grounded essentially in love to Him, or in love to the neighbour. We sometimes indeed speak of the government of truth and the government of good, as expressive of the two kingdoms of the Lord; but we do not mean truth or good separate, but united. That principle which is most active gives its character to the mind. In some minds truth is more active than good, in others good is more active than truth. Yet in every regenerate mind, truth acts from good, or good by truth. And this constitutes the difference between the spiritual and celestial man, church, and heaven.

Jerusalem and Zion, like Arba, which is Hebron, were in the possession of the native inhabitants of Canaan when the children of Israel entered to take their inheritance. Hebron, we have seen, was in possession of the sons of Anak; and in the distribution of the land it was given to Caleb, in fulfilment of a promise which had been given him by Moses forty-five years before, that he should receive all the land on which his feet had trodden, when he went with others to spy Canaan, because he had wholly followed the Lord his God. Caleb and Joshua were the only two of those who left Egypt that entered the Holy Land, the only two who saw the beginning and the end of that eventful history that commenced with the exodus of the Israelites from Egypt, and ended with their settlement in Canaan. And these two men represented those two principles—goodness and truth—which, amidst all the changes which the mind and life experience, continue to exist, and finally prevail. These enter into and are present in all states, and form them into one, by connecting the first with the last, the beginning with the end. They therefore represent also the new will and the new understanding, which are acquired during the progress of the regenerate life.

David may be considered the Joshua of the regal period of the Israelitish history; and to him was reserved the more arduous work of wresting Jerusalem and Zion from the hands of the Jebusites.

Some difficulty has been experienced in regard to the circumstance of the blind and the lame being intrusted with the defence of the stronghold of Zion, and of David offering a reward, or making it a matter of peculiar merit and importance, to smite the lame and the blind.

Although the literal sense of the Word is written for the sake of the spiritual sense, and in some instances is made to yield to it, yet there is no wisdom in creating difficulties where none exist, and the simplest will generally be found the truest and most satisfactory way of explaining such difficulties as the Scriptures, like human writings, sometimes present. The most reasonable view of the matter appears to be, that the place was so strongly fortified, as well as so greatly favoured by nature, that the Jebusites in derision intrusted its defence to the lame and blind, and taunted David with his inability to wrest it even from their feeble hands. There is no reason to suppose that when the Jebusites perceived the nature of the enemy they had to contend with, they left the fate of their city in the hands of those they had derisively placed upon its walls. They no doubt brought their whole strength to bear upon their besiegers, and found its utmost efforts unavailing.

But whatever view may be taken of the precise meaning of the singular circumstance of the inhabitants of Jerusalem affecting to intrust the defence of their city to the most helpless members of their community, the internal spiritual sense remains the same : the fact itself is sufficient for our guidance.

The lame and the blind are the evils and falsities of our own hearts and understandings. In Scripture, where diseases of the body signify diseases of the mind, lameness, which implies partial or entire inability to walk or to work, signifies a debilitated or perverse state of the will, which prevents one from living a useful life ; and blindness, because the eyes correspond to the understanding, signifies ignorance or error—which is either unintentional or wilful mental blindness.

If we consider this subject as relating to the work of human regeneration, Zion and Jerusalem, in the hands of the Jebusites, will be seen to represent the will and understanding not yet delivered from the power of evil desires and false persuasions. In David we see a type, in the highest sense, of the Lord as the Deliverer and Saviour, by whose omnipotent arm the enemies of the heart and mind are overcome, and who establishes His kingdom where that of Satan once had been. But whether we speak of the Lord or of His Divine love and truth it is the same : for the Lord is Love itself and Truth itself ; and He is present in His love and truth in the minds of men, but cannot be present, as a saving power, out of or without them. Whether therefore we speak of the Lord and His power, or of His truth and its power, within us, it is the same ; and in this sense and way we may consider the Lord's representative, David, in the present circumstances. The truth of the Lord has now, we may consider, laid siege to the highest thoughts and affections of the mind, the most powerful stronghold of the evils and falsities of our hereditary nature ; and in the particulars of the Divine record we may find some instructive lessons as

to the nature and results of the contest. The lame and the blind are represented as the great obstacles to the reduction and possession of the city by David ; and the king himself regards them as such, since he exhorts the people to get up to the gutter and smite them.

The Jebusites, as one of the seven nations who were devoted to destruction, represented one of the primary or essential evils and falsities with which no league can be made. They were like the seven devils of the New Testament which must be cast out to effect perfect purification, and like the seven spirits more wicked than himself with which the evil spirit that has gone out of a man returns, and by which the last state of that man becomes worse than his first. We are not indeed to understand that the number of such destructive evils is seven ; the number seven is employed to denote the quality rather than the quantity of evils that are essentially destructive of the spiritual life, and which are therefore themselves to be cast out or destroyed. For the number seven, in its favourable sense, is expressive of what is holy, and in its opposite sense, of what is profane. Whatever is evil and false may indeed be said to be profane, and therefore the seven nations and seven evil spirits comprehend all evils and falsities. Yet there are evils and false principles which are not essentially so in relation to those who are in them, when they are the fruit of ignorance, or the indirect but unintentional results of an imperfect or erroneous faith. Such evils are not essentially profane, nor absolutely destructive of spiritual life ; and these were represented by the remote nations whom the children of Israel were permitted to spare and make tributaries. The Jebusites, under their more favourable representative character, signify a false principle in which there is something of truth ; and for this reason they were long permitted to remain in Jerusalem, and were never entirely expelled. In one respect the presence of some redeeming quality in that which is nevertheless essentially wrong is the means of its preservation, since evil does not appear so evil when it can present a good side, nor does falsity appear so false when it can show something of truth. The magicians of Egypt were able to deceive by simulating the miracles of Moses, so long as these miracles represented states in which there was a mixture of evil and good, as of truth and falsity ; but as soon as Moses came to perform wonders which represented states of evil and falsity alone, the power of the magicians ceased. Those who are well disposed cannot be deceived and led by mere evil and falsity, but they can be seduced by those which can put on some appearance of goodness and truth.

But the Jebusites intrusted the defence of the city to their lame and blind, because these were unable to offer any serious resistance. They must therefore have represented something less essentially

opposed to the Israelites than the men of war who might have been opposed to David and his men, and who stood behind them ready to put forth their power if the necessities of the case should require it. The Lord said to the Jews, "If ye were blind, ye should have no sin : but now ye say, We see ; therefore your sin remaineth." Blindness, when it signifies ignorance, is not sinful ; lameness, when it signifies the want, but not the abuse of power, is not criminal. But when these are assumed, or when, as in the present instance, the blind and the lame are put forward in derision or for deception, then is the criminality greater than where there is no confession of sin, no show of humility or of impotence. The lame and the blind are therefore spoken of as being hated of David's soul, as well as pointed out for destruction. Yet it is to be observed that not these alone are mentioned as the objects of his hate and hostility. For David says, "Whosoever getteth up to the gutter, and smiteth the Jebusites, and the lame and the blind, that are hated," evidently combining them in his mind, as the enemies against whom his hatred and power were to be directed. It is added, indeed, as if these feeble opponents were the special objects of his dislike, that the Israelites therefore said, "The blind and the lame shall not come into the house." But there is some obscurity about this passage, that leaves room to doubt whether it lends any countenance to this idea. In the margin of our Bibles it is rendered differently, so as to put this expression into the mouth of the lame and blind themselves : "Because they had said, even the lame and the blind, He shall not come into the house." There is something unaccountable in the idea of the Israelites declaring, for this is not spoken by David alone, that the lame and blind should not come into the house, unless we suppose this to have been a decree made at a future period. For then there was no house of the Lord in Jerusalem. The tabernacle was not set up there till several years afterwards ; nor is there any reason to suppose that any of the Jebusites would be permitted to come into the house of the Lord.

After David had taken the stronghold of Zion, he dwelt in the fort and called it the city of David, and built round about from Millo and inward. This stronghold of error had become the city of truth ; and had acquired a "new name" expressive of its new quality. And what was possessed needed to be defended. The building round about from Millo and inward was no doubt the beginning at least of those magnificent edifices, both for defence and enjoyment, which afterwards called forth the Psalmist's praises of this "joy of the whole earth." "Walk about Zion, and go round about her : tell the towers thereof. Mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces" (Ps. xlviii. 12, 13). The attainment of a state of holiness, and the preservation of that state when attained, are objects that should be combined in our religious life.

David had now entered on a new career, attended, as all spiritual progress is, with hindrances and trials, which are but the permitted means of calling forth mental energy, and increasing humility and trust. "David went on, and grew great, and the Lord God of hosts was with him." Those who go on in the way of truth and grow in the love of goodness have the God of love and truth with them, nay, in them; for it is He that enables them both to will and to do of His good pleasure. The Lord of hosts is with them in their spiritual conflicts. The armies that He leads forth for the aid of the faithful, are His angelic hosts and the truths of His Word. These ever act together. They are the instruments by which the Lord opposes the hosts of the enemy. These opposing hosts are in our own hearts and minds. There is the conflict, there is the victory, which cannot fail to be obtained when the Lord God of hosts is with us.

One result of David's success and greatness was that Hiram, king of Tyre, sent messengers to him with materials and workmen, and they built David a house. Hiram, who afterwards did so much to aid Solomon in the building of the temple, represented those who possess the knowledge of goodness and truth, and who thus supply the means and intelligence for building up in the mind a habitation for the Lord. David's house was such a habitation, not, indeed, like the temple, which was a type, not only of the regenerate mind, as a temple of the Holy Spirit, both of the Divine humanity of the Lord, as the temple of His Divinity; his house was a type of the mind when the Lord's truth finds in it a fixed abode. "David [therefore] perceived that the Lord had established him king over Israel, and that He had exalted his kingdom for His people Israel's sake." This stage in David's progress represents the establishment of spiritual truth as a governing principle in the regenerate mind. The spiritual state is not yet perfected; but the spiritual principle has obtained so firm a hold on the affections, that it gives the mind a joyful sense of stability and therefore of power.

Distinct though not apart from this spiritual view of the subject, David expresses an enlightened view of the purpose for which kings reign. The Lord had exalted David's kingdom for His people Israel's sake. This is the principle of the Divine government. The Lord governs for His people's sake. He desires that His kingdom should be exalted in the hearts of men, that He may rule them for their own good. He has no view to His own glory separate from their happiness.

Another result of the prosperous condition of David's kingdom is one that, naturally considered, is not so pleasing to reflect upon. "David took him more concubines and wives out of Jerusalem, after he was come from Hebron: and there were yet sons and daughters born to David." Spiritually, these additions mean an increase of

the affections of truth and goodness, and the sons and daughters born are the virtues that are produced by them. The names of the wives are not given ; but the names of the sons born to David in Jerusalem are mentioned. As natural births mean spiritual births, the sons of David, like the sons of Jacob, have a representative character, and their names have a spiritual meaning. The order of their birth is also descriptive of the order in which the qualities they represent come into existence. It would perhaps be difficult accurately to explain the nature and order of the spiritual births which these sons of David represent. And yet the Divine record affords the means of forming some conception of what is involved in these successive births. Hebrew names have a meaning, although we cannot always be certain what their exact meaning is. And as, in Scripture, names are significative as well as persons and things, they serve as the means of interpretation. Let us see whether the signification of the names given to the eleven sons of David born in Jerusalem does not suggest some idea of a series of qualities that enrich the mind in the progress of the regenerate life. Shammuah, signifies hearing ; Shobab, brought back (from enemies) ; Nathan, given (by God) ; Solomon, peaceable ; Ibhar, whom He (God) elects ; Elishua, God the rich ; Nepheg, shoot, bud ; Japhia, illustrious ; Elishama, my God will hear, or hearken ; Eliada, whom God knows, *i.e.* acknowledges and cares for ; Eliphalet, God of salvation. The series begins with hearing and ends with salvation. But there is a connection of the whole, which we may attempt to trace.

The first son is named from hearing ; and hearing is faith in the will, as seeing is faith in the understanding. Faith in the will, or obedience to the truth, delivers the Christian disciple from the power of his enemies, which are the evils of his own heart. So far as evil is removed, the Lord gives good, or, what is the same, charity. And when good is united to truth, or charity to faith, the Christian comes into a peaceable state, or receives of the Lord's peace. Then is he numbered with the elect ; for the elect are those whom the Lord has chosen, because they have chosen Him as their teacher and guide. When the disciple has chosen the good part, he becomes rich in God, being enriched with the treasures of wisdom and knowledge ; with the fear of the Lord : that is wisdom. A new state of development now begins. When the life of love flows into the mind from the Lord, as heat from the sun into a tree, it causes it to bud, and to put forth shoots. Next the buds unfold themselves in a garb of foliage, and the tree puts forth its blossoms as the promised wealth of harvest ; and this is the spiritual state of being illustrious, for blossoms signify intelligence, and fruit the works of righteousness. These two states are not the beginning of the new life ; for the regenerate man must, like a tree,

have attained some degree of maturity before he can have the power of reproduction. But what connection is there between this last state and that which is expressed by God hearing? A blessed and fruitful state of the Church is described by Hosea in these words : " It shall come to pass in that day, I will hear, saith the Lord, I will hear the heavens and they shall hear the earth ; and the earth shall hear the corn, and the wine, and the oil ; and they shall hear Jezreel. And I will sow her unto me in the earth " (ii. 21-23). The Lord hears us when all things of the mind from the highest to the lowest correspond, each answering to the other, and all in a state of agreement with Him. There are two different acts of hearing. We hear the Lord when we receive His truth into our will ; He hears us when our will is in agreement with His truth. The first is reception, the second is reciprocation. When the Lord hears us, He knows us, and we also know Him. " I know My sheep, and am known of Mine. My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me : and I give unto them eternal life ; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand." Then truly may the Christian say, God my salvation !

There is some similarity between these eleven sons of David and the last eleven sons of Jacob.

The name of the first of these sons of David has the same signification as that of the second son of Jacob, and he has the same spiritual meaning. Reuben was Jacob's first-born, and he was named from seeing ; Simeon was his second son, and he was named from hearing. The understanding sees truth, the will hears it. Now regeneration does not begin actually till truth enters the will, that is, till Simeon is born. David's sons born in Hebron were six in number, and the number six has relation to truth, and to states of truth. His sons born in Hebron may be considered, relatively to those born in Jerusalem, as Reuben was to the other sons of Jacob. It is deserving of remark that, like Reuben, some of David's first sons misconducted themselves. Amnon ravished his sister Tamar, Absalom rebelled against his father David, and Adonijah rebelled against his brother Solomon. All three died a violent death, as the result directly or remotely of their crimes. Reuben and Absalom committed the same sin : each went up unto his father's couch.

So far we may consider the sons of David and the sons of Jacob to have a relative signification. As natural signify spiritual births, the same general fact is represented by them all, differing according to the state of mind and stage of the new life in each case.

David's prosperity did not secure him against trial. Regeneration is to a considerable extent a succession of states of alternate trial and triumph, of tribulation and repose. " When the Philistines heard that they had anointed David king over Israel, all the Philistines came up

to seek David." So formidable was this array that David again betook himself to the hold. The Philistines also came and spread themselves in the valley of Rephaim, or of the giants. But David, encouraged by the Lord his God, went up against them, and defeated them. A second invasion by the same foes was followed by the same result; and David "smote the Philistines from Geba until thou come to Gazer."

Having already considered several of Israel's conflicts with the Philistines, we can the more readily leave these without particular explanation. Not that they are unimportant; but they can be more easily understood from those which have been already explained. Other events, and of a different character, claim their share of our attention.

CHAPTER IX.

THE ARK OF GOD BROUGHT INTO THE HOLY CITY.

2 Samuel vi.

THE ark of God was the most sacred of all the sacred things of the Israelitish Church. It was the consecrated receptacle of the two tables of stone, on which the ten commandments were engraven by the finger of God. That law was called the law of the covenant, because the keeping of its precepts was the condition on which rested all the promises of God to His people. That condition still remains. "If thou wilt enter into life keep the commandments." There is, however, one difference. We must keep them in the spirit as well as in the letter. But as the obligation is increased, so is the blessing of obedience enhanced. If we have a spiritual law, we have also as a reward a spiritual inheritance. As the law of God is to be engraven on our hearts, so is the kingdom of God to be within us. With the Christian "the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." When this kingdom is set up in the heart, the Christian has his inheritance in himself; and it remains as a treasure in heaven that waxeth not old. It remains sure amidst all outward changes.

This interest that we have in the law makes everything relating to it, or related of it, interesting to us. Those treasured histories of the Old Testament respecting the ark of God, how interesting do they become to us when we know that all the singular and often affecting circumstances related of it happened for ensamples, and are written for our admonition!

In the history of the journey through the wilderness we read of the

law being delivered amidst the thunders of Sinai, and directions given for the construction of the ark, wherein the tables on which it was written were to be placed. The ark was to be of shittim wood, overlaid with pure gold within and without, to teach us that the laws of heaven have their immediate dwelling-place in the good of love, free from selfishness and self-righteousness, the heart inwardly acknowledging no merit but that of the Lord, from whom all righteousness comes. Over the ark was the mercy-seat, also of pure gold, and on the mercy-seat were the two cherubims, between which God was to meet and commune with Moses, and through him with the people. The ten commandments are a Divine summary of our duties to God and to our neighbour, and therefore contain the whole duty of man as a religious being. For this reason our Lord, while He enforced the keeping of the commandments as a condition of eternal life, raised them above the low standard of Jewish morality. He taught that the first of all the commandments is, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God above all things, and that the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself; and declared that upon these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets. Love to God and love to man, which all the commandments teach and on which they are all fulfilled, are the two cherubim that were over the mercy-seat that covered the ark containing the Divine law. The Lord meets with His people where love to God and love to man are united; and their union rests upon purity of heart and holiness of life, as the mercy-seat and the cherubim rested upon the ark of the testimony. The ark, thus containing the law and surmounted by the cherubim, was placed in the inmost of the tabernacle, to remind us that the Divine law is to be placed in the inmost of the heart and mind.

The ark henceforward became the centre round which the Levites congregated and the congregation encamped. It was carried before them in their journeyings, and returned with them into their rest. It divided the Jordan and overthrew the walls of Jericho. For when the Divine law is in the heart, it has power to remove all obstacles that self-love and love of the world offer to our progress in the spiritual life.

But a time came when the children of Israel no longer possessed the ark as a means of protection and blessing. Under the priesthood of Eli there was war with the Philistines, and Israel was overcome. In their distress and perplexity the elders caused the ark to be brought into the camp, and Israel shouted with a great shout, so that the earth rang again. But this was not the shout of holy trust and confidence in God. Their priestly leaders were shamelessly corrupt, and they themselves had apostatized to the worship of Ashtaroth, the queen of heaven, a name and title of the moon, as Baal was of the sun. There can be no real confidence in God when there

is iniquity in the midst, such as was now the case with the children of Israel. In their next encounter with the Philistines, the Israelites were smitten, and the ark of God was taken. The ark was carried as a trophy into the country of the Philistines. But if the presence of evil in the good hinders the very ark of God from protecting or delivering them, what must its effect be upon the evil themselves? It is the means of their destruction. "This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil." And it may be said of the tables of the law, as it is said of the Lord Himself, who was that very law, "whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder." The ark soon showed its power against its unbelieving possessors. Dagon fell down in pieces before it. The inhabitants of Ashdod were destroyed and smitten with disease. The diviners were called, and advised that the ark should be sent with an offering back into the land of Israel. Two milch kine were tied to a cart, on which the ark, and the coffer containing the golden mice and images of their emerods, were placed; and the kine took the straight way to Beth-shemesh, a city of Judah. This was no doubt done in accordance with the law of correspondence, the remains of which still continued among the Philistines. The ark was placed upon a new cart, because a new cart signifies doctrine undefiled by evil and falsity; the cart was drawn by milch kine on which no yoke had come, because they signified good natural affections which have not been brought under servitude to false persuasions. The kine spontaneously took the way to Beth-shemesh, to indicate that uncorrupted natural affection inclines to the truth which leads to spiritual goodness, or goodness having a spiritual origin. The men of Beth-shemesh clave the wood of the cart, and offered up the kine a burnt-offering unto the Lord; for this act implied the dedication to the Lord of the true thoughts and good affections of the natural mind, by which they become spiritual and saving.

But the men of Beth-shemesh themselves brought evil upon many of the people by an act of irreverence of which they were guilty. They looked into the ark, and the Lord smote of the people fifty thousand and threescore and ten men. Such an act seems in itself but a venial sin, and under a spiritual dispensation might not be regarded as a sin at all. But that to which the men of Beth-shemesh belonged was a representative Church, in which everything was typical. An act done from an idly curious or with a profane eye, an act which, with the deepest reverence, could be lawful for none but for the priest only, brought upon them a destruction which, like the act itself, was representative. To seek to penetrate into the inmost of the Holy Word, and see its hidden wisdom, with an understanding

unsanctified by the Spirit of truth, and a heart uninfluenced by the love of good, is destructive of spiritual life.

Terrified by this destruction, the Beth-shemites sent to the men of Kirjath-jearim, who came and fetched the ark, and brought it into the house of Abinadab in the hill, and sanctified Eleazar his son to keep the ark of the Lord. "And it came to pass, while the ark abode in Kirjath-jearim, that the time was long ; for it was twenty years : and all the house of Israel lamented after the Lord." There the ark remained till the time of David. One of the first acts of his reign was to bring it up out of its obscure place in Gibeah, and set it in his place, in the midst of the tabernacle he had pitched for it in Jerusalem. The account of this translation of the ark is that which we are now to consider.

David, with thirty thousand of the chosen men of Israel, went to bring up the ark of God from the house of Abinadab. When they had placed it upon a new cart, they set out with it, accompanied by two sons of Abinadab, Uzzah and Ahio, playing upon all manner of instruments. When, however, they came to Nachon's threshing-floor, the oxen shook the ark, and Uzzah put forth his hand and took hold of it : and for this rash act, the Lord's anger was kindled against him, and He smote him there, that he died by the ark. David's fear for the Lord was so great, that instead of removing the ark to his own city, he carried it aside into the house of Obed-edom the Gittite, where it remained for three months. Hearing that the Lord had blessed the house of Obed-edom because of the ark, he brought it up with great sacrificings and rejoicings to the city of David.

This removal of the ark by successive stages, or from one place to another, is representative of the successive elevation of the Divine law of love and truth in the mind, which takes place during the progress of the regenerate life. Three places are mentioned in which the ark rested. The first two were its temporary abode, the last was its fixed and proper dwelling-place. These three places, and the resting of the ark in them, and its removal from one to the other, represented the three states through which the regenerate pass in their upward progress to the kingdom of heaven. For every one who is fully regenerated is first natural, afterwards spiritual, and lastly celestial. To express it more strictly, man is regenerated first as to the natural degree of his mind, then as to the spiritual, and finally as to the celestial. And these degrees of the mind are signified by the house of Abinadab, the house of Obed-edom, and the city of David. In this view of the subject the account of the removal of the ark to its final resting-place in Zion describes representatively the work of regeneration from its beginning to its end, in those who attain to the highest degree of religious perfection. It may seem therefore to have but little interest

for any others than those who have reached this elevated state. There is, however, in every particular stage a resemblance of the whole. And in this way the relation may be applied by every one to his own state. The ark of God, as a symbol of the Divine law of love and charity, experiences a progressive elevation in every regenerate mind analogous to that which it has in those who reach the purest condition of celestial life. The Divine law, in every regenerate one, is successively raised out of the memory into the understanding, and out of the understanding into the will. The first two are but the temporary abode of the law, the will is its final and permanent dwelling-place. The imperfectness of the previous state is marked by the act of Uzzah. His putting forth his hand to prevent the ark from falling to the ground, points to that state of the mind when man acts under the influence of the feeling or persuasion that he is able to keep the law by his own power, or support or vindicate it by his own wisdom.

The removal of the ark by successive stages representing the successive elevation of the Divine law in the regenerate mind, there are some particulars of the history respecting it which deserve our attention.

David and those who were with him played before the Lord while removing the ark both from its first and from its second resting-place. As music is expressive of affection, the various instruments mentioned signify the various affections of the mind, the harmonious delights of which produce that which may be called the music of the soul—the sense of peace with God and goodwill to men. This is the true music of the spheres, and fills heaven itself with sweetest harmony. The instruments on which they played on their way from the house of Abinadab signified the gladness of the mind resulting from the natural and spiritual affections of truth. The dancing of David, with the sound of a trumpet, on their way from the house of Obed-edom to Zion, signified joy of heart resulting from the affections of spiritual and celestial good.

While on the way to Zion, and after he brought the ark into it, David sacrificed to the Lord, to represent the dedication to Him of all the principles and faculties of the mind, this being true worship. He blessed the people, and dealt among the whole multitude of Israel, as well to the women as men, to every one a cake of bread, and a good piece of flesh, and a flagon of wine. The people, the multitude of Israel, represented the common affections—the women the affections of good, the men the affections of truth. The bread, flesh, and wine given them are the spiritual and celestial good and truth, by which, as their proper food, they are sustained and delighted. But when these general feasts are spoken of, the mutual satisfaction and delight of all the affections of the mind are understood. Satisfaction and joy that

fill the whole mind are the feast of the soul, and that which was represented by the feasts of which we read so often in the Sacred Word.

The introduction of the ark into Zion after all its wanderings in the wilderness, its capture by the Philistines, its abode in the houses of Abinadab and Obed-edom, was no doubt the greatest and most joyous event connected with that sacred symbol that took place previous to its introduction into the temple of Solomon. Representing the completed work of regeneration, the event is fraught with matter of the most important significance. And although we may not be able to enter into it as a subject which is realized in our own experience as a whole, yet it may have found its fulfilment in some particulars of our spiritual life. Every single truth, as a part of the Divine law, is an image of the whole; and every single truth that passes out of the memory into the understanding, and out of the understanding into the will, and again from the will into act, performs a circle that is an image of the greater. And every truth that thus completes the circle of life becomes a part of our eternal inheritance. It has attained its place in the inmost of the mind, and will, if we remain faithful, continue there for ever.

In the highest sense this event represents the completed work of the Lord's glorification, as the origin and pattern of our regeneration. And in connecting these two in our minds, we may find more abundant reason for rejoicing. Connected together as cause and effect, the one sheds light upon the other, for in the higher we see the lower in its cause and pattern, in the lower we see the higher in its effect and image. To that Divine work in the Lord we trace every saving work that can be effected in ourselves. And when we reflect that the Lord came into the world, and went down into Egypt, and passed through the temptations of the wilderness, and overthrew the works of the devil, and finally entered into His glory, only that He might deliver us from bondage, and lead us to victory, and raise us into spiritual power and happiness, we must indeed be desirous to connect these works together, not only in our reflections but in our experience. As subjects in which we have a deep interest, we may profitably enter into them with the earnest and jubilant feelings which the records and images of them are intended to express and inspire. The entrance of the ark of God into the city of David is generally, and we have no doubt justly, considered to be the theme of that sublime psalm which the Church usually chants in celebrating the Lord's ascension. The 24th Psalm is written in the responsive form, and is supposed to have been sung when the holy ark arrived at the gates of the Holy City, David and the multitude without, and the priests, the Levites, and the people within, singing in responsive strains, "Lift up your heads, O

ye gates ; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors ; and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory ? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle. Lift up your heads, O ye gates ; even lift them up, ye everlasting doors ; and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory ? The Lord of hosts, He is the King of glory."

Looking at the Lord in His ascension as one who has gone before us—as that one who, having been lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Him, we may make a practical application of the subject in the responsive words of the same psalm. "Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord ? or who shall stand in His holy place ? He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart ; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully. He shall receive the blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of his salvation."

When David had concluded the service in the tabernacle which he had set up for the sacred ark, he went to bless his household. But he met with a singularly unkind reception. "Michal the daughter of Saul came out to meet David, and said, How glorious was the king of Israel to day, who uncovered himself to day in the eyes of the handmaids of his servants, as one of the vain fellows shamelessly uncovereth himself !" This reproachful speech drew from David the only severe expressions he ever addressed to any one of the house of Saul. "David said unto Michal, It was before the Lord, which chose me before thy father, and before all his house, to appoint me ruler over the people of the Lord, over Israel : therefore will I play before the Lord. And I will yet be more vile than thus, and will be base in mine own sight : and of the maid-servants which thou hast spoken of, of them shall I be had in honour." In speaking of Michal, I have said that she represented rather a natural than a spiritual affection. She seems to have had little sympathy with David in his holy work of bringing up the ark, and raising the law into its rightful position, though not into its final dwelling-place. So far as Michal represents the Church, she represents it in its Judaizing rather than in its Christian aspect, like those early disciples who wished to unite the law and the gospel, by placing the Jewish ceremonies on a level with Christian rites, making the law of ordinances as necessary for salvation as the law of life. The natural affection, however firmly it may adhere to the law, does not delight in it ; and it was to the gestures expressive of delight that Michal objected in David's conduct. Especially does the natural affection object to see the spiritual uncovered, which was the highest of David's offences against dignity and propriety in the eyes of his wife. The conduct of Michal is no doubt to be understood as having brought a Divine judgment upon her. She had no child to the day of her death. This implies, when spiritually regarded, that between

David and Michal there was no true marriage. "Children are an heritage of the Lord: and the fruit of the womb is His reward" (Ps. cxxvii. 3). When spiritually He makes women childless, it is because there is a want of harmony between the natural mind and the spiritual, whose union is necessary to give birth to the virtues of the religious life. When natural affection is not in unison with spiritual truth, there can be no such union between them as to make the life fruitful. And if that state of affection remains, Michal, who might have been a joyful mother of children, shall have no child till the day of her death.

CHAPTER X.

DAVID DESIRES BUT IS FORBIDDEN TO BUILD A HOUSE FOR THE ARK OF THE LORD TO DWELL IN.

2 Samuel vii.

THE scene which the sacred historian now presents to us is the peaceful one of David sitting in his house with Nathan the prophet. The Lord had given him rest round about from all his enemies. Regarding the glory of God more than his own splendour, he says to Nathan, "See now, I dwell in an house of cedar, and the ark of God dwelleth within curtains." It would be a very low idea of this sentiment to transfer it literally to ourselves, and regard it as a reproof of our own not uncommon practice, of surrounding ourselves with elegance and comfort, and leaving the house of God with but scant provision of either. But if we did apply his words in this way, we should receive but small encouragement from the sequel of David's zealous plea for the honour of his God. The prophet, indeed, sympathized with David's sentiment, and entered warmly into his idea. "Nathan said to the king, Go, do all that is in thine heart; for the Lord is with thee." But both prophet and king had resolved without asking counsel of Him whom they desired to honour. "It came to pass that night, that the word of the Lord came unto Nathan, saying, Go and tell My servant David, Thus saith the Lord, Shalt thou build Me an house for Me to dwell in?" Since the Lord brought the children of Israel out of Egypt, He had walked in a tent and in a tabernacle, and had asked none of the tribes or judges, "Why build ye not Me an house of cedar?" He had taken David from the sheepcote to make him a ruler over His people Israel; He had been with him whithersoever he went; He had cut off all his enemies; He had made him a great name. Moreover, He would appoint a place for His people Israel, which they would dwell in, and move no more, neither be afflicted any

more by the children of wickedness : He would also build David a house. Notwithstanding all this, not he, but his son that should reign after him would build a house for the Lord to dwell in.

In all that the Lord says to Nathan, no reason is given why the temple was not to be built by David but by Solomon. The reason is made known when the temple is about to be built. Here we may say that, as the temple represented the glorified humanity, it was to be built by the king by whom that humanity was represented. Our principal object here is to notice some of the particulars of the present narrative.

If David represented the Lord, how are we to understand his ignorance of the Divine will in regard to the building of a house to His name? In the Gospel history there is the appearance, at least, of the Lord being ignorant of some things. We need not stop to consider the instances in which the Lord marvels, and makes inquiries. He who needed not that any should testify of man, for He knew what was in man, and who gave so many evidences of knowing persons and events at a distance, could not be really ignorant of persons and circumstances near at hand. There is, however, one instance in which the Lord Himself makes confession of His ignorance. Of His own second coming He says, "Of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels who are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father" (Mark xiii. 32). We might take this statement in all its literalness, if Jesus were a mere man, or even the first created intelligence. But if we admit His Divinity, it is impossible to understand it in its merely literal sense. For even if we believed Him to be a Divine person distinct from His Father, it could make no difference, since the Three Persons of the Godhead have all equal Divinity. But when we understand the distinction in the Godhead to be that of Essentials, we can see the ground of our Lord's declaration. The Father is the Divine love, the Son is the Divine wisdom. Now the first Christian Church or dispensation is called the kingdom of the Son, and the second is called the kingdom of the Father. Thus St. Paul speaks of the end, when the Son shall deliver up the kingdom to the Father ; when the Son also Himself shall be subject to the Father, that God may be all in all (1 Cor. xv. 28). This is commonly explained as relating to what is called the Lord's mediatorial kingdom, which the Son is to resign at the end of the world, when His intercession for sinners shall no more be required. But what of the Son being subject to the Father? There is a dogmatic answer, but it is unnecessary to consider it. Thankful we may be that we are delivered from all this perplexity. Clear and beautiful is the truth, that the kingdom of the Son is the Church and the member of the Church as governed by Divine wisdom or truth, and that the kingdom of the

Father is the Church and the member of the Church as governed by Divine love. The kingdom of the Son must of necessity precede the kingdom of the Father. Truth must reign till all things are put under its feet ; till all rebellious thoughts and affections are subdued, and made subject to Christ. But when all enemies, or all enmities, are put under the power of the truth of God, then His truth gives up the kingdom to His love, which enters on its peaceful reign. Even truth itself becomes subject to love ; for faith becomes secondary and subordinate to charity, truth to goodness, the understanding to the will. Love is the fulfilling of the law. Against love there is no law. He who has love is not under the law. The law has done its work. It has put all things under its feet ; and it has resigned the kingdom to love, and is itself subject to its beneficent rule.

How plain is the analogy in this case to the reign of David and that of Solomon. David was a man of war ; Solomon was a man of peace. Yet Solomon owed his peaceful reign to the warlike reign of David. The Lord put all the enemies of Israel under David's feet ; and when all the enemies of Israel were conquered, a reign of peace followed as its natural sequence. But all this does not reveal the cause or explain the fact of the Son not knowing the day and hour of visitation and of His future coming ; or David's mistaken zeal for the Lord's house. The Lord's ignorance of the day and hour of His coming was not absolute but relative. Nothing could be hid from His infinite wisdom ; but His wisdom does not reveal His love except to those who receive it. Time is the symbol of state. A state of love is unknown to those who are in a state of truth. Every state reveals itself to those who enter it. In a lower state we may know that a higher exists ; but what that state is in itself, we can only know by experience. We know that the reign of law is to be followed by the reign of love, but what that love is, love only knows and can reveal. We may, like David, desire and even attempt to anticipate it ; but the Divine command is, to refrain. A new birth is to take place before this work can be performed, this new house built. "When thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build an house for My name, and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom for ever." The two kingdoms, the spiritual and the celestial, of which heaven consists, and which were also represented by the kingdom of David and Solomon, are so distinct, that the wisdom of the angels of the higher kingdom transcends the apprehension of the angels of the lower ; nor can any enter into celestial wisdom until they attain the celestial state. The new name in the white stone no man knoweth save he that receiveth it.

Such is the Divine mode of teaching us that every state of life or

stage of regeneration has its own duties, its own work, and its own kind and measure of knowledge. And as it is with individuals, so it is with dispensations. One passes into another, and yet so distinct are they in character, that one can neither know nor do what belongs to the state and uses of its successor.

When Nathan delivered the Divine message to David, then went in king David, and sat before the Lord ; and, with profound humility and deep gratitude, poured out his heart before Him. Adoring the Lord God, besides whom there is no God, who had redeemed Israel for Himself, from the nations and their gods, he praises Him for the good which He had spoken concerning His servant, and for His gracious promise that He would establish his house for ever.

Whether we regard David as a type of the Saviour or of the saint, and his prayer as expressive of the Lord's aspirations to the Father or of the saint's pious adorations of his Saviour, we may learn a great lesson. The states of humiliation through which the Lord passed during the days in which He carried our frail nature, teach us lessons of profound wisdom. They tell us, so far as we can comprehend them, what the Lord endured and did for our sake, and also what we must endure and do for His : with this important difference, that all He did was for our benefit, while all we are required to do is for our own. For His sake, indeed, our works, both of passion and of action, must be done, for the end sanctifies the deed. Our works are good only when the Lord is in them as their end and cause, when His love prompts and His wisdom guides us. Self-abnegation must lie at the root of our self-denial as well as of our active duties. For it is possible to practise self-denial for the sake of self, as well as do good deeds for the sake of reward. Self-abnegation is a high state to attain, and can only be reached by patience and perseverance. But not only have we the example of our blessed Lord before us, we have His Spirit with us—that of which it is said, “ The Holy Spirit was not yet given ; because that Jesus was not yet glorified ” (John vii. 39). The Spirit of Jesus differs from the Spirit of Jehovah. The Spirit of Jehovah was rather a creative than a regenerative Spirit. The Spirit of Jesus is the Spirit and power of all that He accomplished in the world ; it is the Spirit of Jehovah in His Divine humanity, and it therefore conveys to those who receive it the power to become, by regeneration, images of what the Lord has become by glorification.

CHAPTER XI.

NATIONS OUT OF CANAAN CONQUERED AND MADE TRIBUTARY.

2 *Samuel* viii.

THE rest which the Lord had given David from all his enemies round about he did not long enjoy. About two years after he had taken Jerusalem we find him engaged in war with several different nations. The first of these are the irrepressible Philistines, whom David subdued, and from whom he takes Metheg-ammah, an important town in Gath, which, from its commanding position, was called the bridle of the mother city. A blow was thus struck at the metropolis of Philistia. Like one of the heads of the Apocalyptic beast, it was wounded to death, but like it also its death-wound was healed; for although subdued, the Philistines were not yet wholly vanquished.

After recording this subjugation of the Philistines, the chapter is occupied in relating the wars which David carried into some of the nations beyond the borders of Canaan, which he not only conquered but made tributary. And this leads us to consider a distinction which the Israelites were commanded to make between the Canaanitish nations and those whose countries bordered upon Canaan, but were separate from it.

The seven nations inhabiting Canaan were to be utterly destroyed, but the nations beyond Canaan, unless they resisted, were only to be subdued and made tributary. In Deuteronomy (chap. xx.) this is clearly stated: "When thou comest nigh unto a city to fight against it, then proclaim peace unto it. And it shall be, if it make thee answer of peace, and open unto thee, then it shall be, that all the people that is found therein shall be tributaries unto thee, and they shall serve thee. . . . Thus shalt thou do unto all the cities which are very far off from thee, which are not of the cities of these nations. But of the cities of these people, which the Lord thy God doth give thee for an inheritance, thou shalt save alive nothing that breatheth."

The nations of Canaan represented evil loves and false persuasions that are essentially opposed to everything good and true, and which can neither be reconciled nor made subservient to right principles. But the nations out of Canaan represented affections and persuasions that are indeed remote from goodness and truth, but are not essentially opposed to them, and can therefore be made tributary to them, and serve them. On this interesting and important subject the Writings throw a clear light, as the following quotation will show. Though the

author's remarks refer directly to another subject, they are quite applicable to this.

“Evils with man are of various kinds ; there are evils with which good cannot be mixed, and there are evils with which good can be mixed ; the case is the same with falsities ; and unless it was so, it would be impossible for any man to be regenerated. The evils and falsities with which goods and truths cannot be mixed, are such as are contrary to love to God and to love towards our neighbour. For example ; if any one loves himself in preference to others, and under the influence of that love studies to excel others in moral and civil life, in scientifics and doctrinals, and to be exalted to dignities and likewise to opulence above others, and yet acknowledges and adores God, performs from his heart duties towards his neighbour, and does from conscience what is just and equitable, the evil of that self-love is such as to admit good and truth to be mixed with it ; for it is the evil which is proper to man, and is hereditarily born with him ; and suddenly to take it away from him would be to extinguish the fire of his first life. But if any one love himself in preference to others, and under the influence of that love despises others in comparison with himself, hates those who do not honour, and, as it were, adore him, and therefore feels the delight of hatred in revenge and cruelty, the evil of his love is such as not to admit of good and truth being mixed with it, for they are contraries. Again : if any one believe himself to be pure from sins, and cleansed like a person cleansed of filth by washing in water, when he has once done the work of repentance, and discharged the duties which he has imposed upon himself by repentance, or after confession has been told by his confessor that he is so cleansed, or after he has been a partaker of the Holy Supper ; in case such a one lives a new life, in the affection of what is good and true, this false principle is such as to admit of good being mixed with it ; but in case he lives a worldly and carnal life, as heretofore, the false is then such as not to admit of good being mixed with it. So again ; he who believes that man is saved by virtue of believing what is good, and not by virtue of willing what is good, and nevertheless wills what is good, and in consequence thereof does what is good, this false principle is such as to admit of good and truth being adjoined to it ; but not so in case he does not will and thence do what is good. Again, if any one be ignorant that man rises again after death, and in consequence thereof does not believe in the resurrection, or if he be acquainted with the resurrection, and still doubts and almost denies it, and yet lives in truth and good, this false principle also is such as to be admmissive of good and truth being mixed with it ; but if such a person lives in what is false and evil, the false in this case is admmissive of no such mixture, because of contrariety, and the false destroys the true, and the evil the

good. Further, pretence and cunning, which have good for their end, whether it be the good of the neighbour, or of a man's country, or of the Church, are prudence, and the evils thereto admixed may be mixed with good from and for the sake of the end proposed ; but pretence and cunning, which have evil for their end, are not prudence, but are artifice and deceit, with which good can in no wise be conjoined, for deceit, which has evil for its end, induces an infernal principle in all things in man, and places evil in the midst, and rejects good to the circumference, which order is essentially infernal. The case is similar in numberless other instances. That there are evils and falsities, to which goods and truths can be adjoined, may appear from the fact, that there are so many diverse dogmas and doctrinals, several of which are altogether heretical, and yet in every one of them salvation is attainable ; and also from this, that among the Gentiles who are out of the Church, there is likewise a Church of the Lord, and that although they are in false persuasions, still such as live a life of charity are saved, which could not possibly be the case, unless there were evils which can be mixed with goods, and falsities which can be mixed with truths. Evils which are mixed with goods, and falsities with truths, are wonderfully arranged in order by the Lord, for they are not conjoined, still less are they united, but they are adjoined and applied, and this in such a sort, that goods with truths are in the midst, as in a centre, whilst such evils and falsities are by gradations as the circuits or circumferences, in consequence of which the latter are illustrated by the former, and are variegated like black and white by the light proceeding from the midst or centre. This is heavenly order."

The nations whom David subdued at this time were the Moabites, the Syrians, and the Edomites. David garrisoned their cities, and they became his servants. Two of them are mentioned as having brought gifts, but the other was no doubt also made tributary. Besides these gifts, which were compulsory, the king of Hamath sent him vessels of gold and silver and brass. These did David "dedicate unto the Lord, with the silver and gold that he had dedicated of all nations which he subdued ; of Syria, and of Moab, and of the children of Ammon, and of the Philistines, and of Amalek, and of the spoil of Hadadezer, son of Rehob, king of Zobah." The reduction of these nations to a state of vassalage, is a type of the subjection of the natural man to the authority of the spiritual ; and the dedication of their gifts or their spoil to the Lord, is representative of the sanctification of the possessions of the natural man, by devoting to spiritual uses and eternal ends what had hitherto been employed for natural uses and temporal ends. As the silver and gold, of which the Israelites spoiled the Egyptians, came to be dedicated to the Lord in the construction

and adorning of the tabernacle, the treasures which David obtained from the nations helped to adorn and enrich the temple. But as both the tabernacle and the temple represented, not only the Lord's Humanity, but His Church, and not the general Church only, but the Church as built up and established in the individual mind, we learn from this turning of the spoils and gifts of the nations from profane to sacred uses, the duty of turning all our natural acquisitions, whether they be intellectual or material, into means for promoting the glory of God. This does not imply that they are to be devoted to what are commonly called religious purposes, but that they are to be brought under the government of religious principles, and so employed as to promote the glory of God, by ministering to the best interests of ourselves, and of our neighbour. That which is made to serve the love and truth of God in us, is, in the best sense, dedicated to the Lord, for it is applied to uses that build us up into temples of His presence.

The gifts themselves are various ; but they are spoken of, in the present case, as consisting of gold, silver, and brass ; and these, as sent by the king of Hamath, were in the form of vessels. We have had occasion, more than once, to speak of these receptacles as symbols of what we have called scientifics, that is to say, facts, as distinguished from the conclusions we draw from them, or the wisdom they teach us. Every one recognises the difference between knowledge and wisdom. But we have a better instance in the difference between science and religion. Nor do we need to confine ourselves in this case to natural science. A man may be eminent in religious science and yet have no religion. In regard to natural science, we know that it can be a means of confirming men either in the belief or in the denial of a creative Intelligence. By the believer "the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead" (Rom. i. 20). To the unbeliever, invisible things are assumed to have no existence, and the visible are considered to account for their own existence, and to show that they are able to take care of themselves. It is essential that men should not be forced to believe, therefore God does not reveal Himself to sense, but to reason. It is a less evil to disbelieve from choice than it would be to believe from compulsion. Natural science, therefore, leaves men free. But it does not leave them blameless. That is to say, scientific denial is deeper and more deadly than simple negation. Science creates neither belief nor unbelief, but it confirms the mind more deeply in either. The more deeply the natural man penetrates into the secrets of nature the nearer he believes he is to the origin of life. What he calls the origin of life the spiritual man calls its beginning, the origin of which is in Him who is Life itself, from whom all things are and

live. Scientifics, in fact, are vessels, which men may replenish either from the true vine or from the vine of Sodom and the clusters of Gomorrah, and out of which they may drink either to the true God or to idols—the molten images of their self-love or the graven images of their self-intelligence.

But, on this subject, we must let the light of Revelation in upon ourselves. There, if we have entered on the regenerate life, we shall see what is here described representatively in the history of the Israelites. We shall see the spiritual mind and the natural mind in their true character. In the natural mind we shall find evils that are in their very nature opposed to spiritual truth and goodness; while there are others, some of which may be called infirmities, which can be brought under subjection to spiritual principles, and be made to serve some useful spiritual purpose, the acquirements of the natural man contributing to the perfection of the spiritual. Let us see, then, what these different nations represent.

Moab, the first of these nations that David subdued, was descended from Lot's son by his eldest daughter. In treating of the Ammonites, the descendants of the son of Lot's younger daughter, who were the first to feel Saul's kingly power, we have seen that Moab and Ammon represented the profanation of goodness and truth. Yet they did not represent that degree of profanation which is unpardonable, because unremovable. A Moabite or an Ammonite was not absolutely excluded from the congregation of Israel, but was not allowed to enter until the tenth generation (Deut. xxiii. 3), which implies that the profanation they represented did not necessarily destroy all remains of goodness and truth, but might leave a rudiment, from which a new and spiritual state could be commenced. David's treatment of the Moabites on this occasion teaches something of the same kind. They were subdued and severely treated, but not exterminated. "He smote Moab, and measured them with a line, casting them down to the ground; even with two lines measured he to put to death, and with one full line to keep alive." Dreadful work! And yet apologists tell us, and no doubt tell us truly, that the treatment of the Moabites, as compared with that of conquered nations in those times, was humane. By the law of nations, and even by the law of Moses, the whole of the Moabites had forfeited their lives by their opposition or resistance; and David showed his clemency by saving some. It reminds us of the Calvinistic vindication of the character of God in the decree of election. The whole race by their sins had incurred the sentence of eternal damnation, and God showed His mercy by saving a few. The truth is, the Jews were a barbarous race, and enjoyed the delight of all barbarous nations in shedding blood. They were not chosen because they were better than other nations, but because they were

better adapted to perform a use which concerned the welfare of the human race. Their great use in the Divine economy was to receive and preserve the oracles of God, and to keep alive, however imperfectly, the faith and worship of the one true God. Their barbarism made them fit instruments for rooting out hopelessly corrupt nations, and their facile piety made them the means of keeping the embers of religion from altogether dying out. They served therefore to preserve the spiritual connection between heaven and earth, on which the salvation and even the preservation of the human race depends ; and they could perform acts which represented higher things than they either thought or intended.

Regarding David's treatment of the Moabites, there is some difficulty in understanding the nature of the operation by which the fate of the vanquished was decided. German critics make the text to mean, that David subdued Moab, and then made the whole people lie down on the ground, and measured them with a measuring-line, destining two measures to death, and one measure to life. In other words, instead of exterminating the whole brood, he decimated them, as it were, by a kind of lot, and left it to apparent chance whether any given Moabites were to be slain, or spared. Josephus, however (*Jewish Wars*, vii. 5), has not so taken it ; possibly he was willing to spare David's humanity. Just as the *Chronicles* omit this incident. On the other hand J. D. Michaelis, in his treatise on the Mosaic Law, declares that David was much more merciful than the Mosaic Law if he only killed two-thirds of them.

Whatever the precise nature of the operation may have been, the general conclusion seems to be, that two-thirds were in this way devoted to death, and one-third kept alive. Whatever obscurity there may be respecting the application of the measuring-line and its results, the terms are sufficiently precise to enable us to see the spiritual lesson intended to be conveyed by the circumstances. To measure is to ascertain or estimate the quality of a thing. A mystic man with a measuring-line measured the temple (*Ezek.* xl.), and also Jerusalem (*Zech.* ii. 2), and John was commanded to measure the temple of God and them that worship therein (*Rev.* xi. 1) ; in all which cases, to measure evidently means to discover, or rather to show, the quality or state of the Church. The measuring-line applied to the spiritual Moabites is not, therefore, a measure merely to decide their fate, but a measure to ascertain or express their character. With two lines David measured to put to death, and with one full line, literally, with the fulness of the line, to keep alive. All the Moabites were cast down upon the ground, to represent, that those who live profanely are all equally natural and earthly ; but they were measured with different lines, to show that they are not all equally guilty ; that even with them

"there is a sin unto death, and there is a sin not unto death" (1 John v. 16, 17). Those who were measured with two lines typified those who live profanely from the will with the full consent of the understanding ; while those who were measured with one line represented those who live profanely from one of these two active powers of the mind, but not from both. This subject may be illustrated by one of the laws of Moses. One of the rules of evidence laid down in the Mosaic code was this : "At the mouth of two witnesses, or three witnesses, shall he that is worthy of death be put to death ; but at the mouth of one witness he shall not be put to death" (Deut. xvii. 6). This law, spiritually interpreted, teaches this important, and at the same time hopeful truth. When the will and the understanding, or when the will, the understanding, and the outward life, bear united witness against us ; at the mouth of these two or three witnesses, we bring upon ourselves the sentence of eternal death. But when one of these only witnesses against us, we, of the Divine mercy, are kept alive. Some sin from natural depravity, hardly knowing what sin is and what are its consequences ; some sin from education and habit, as those who have been brought up to crime, as skilled workmen in a not dishonourable but rather dangerous trade. It is not to be supposed that either of these is in a state of innocence. But they come within this saving condition : Natural depravity of the will may not have deeply corrupted the understanding, and misdirection of the understanding may not have deeply corrupted the will. Indeed, we can hardly speak of will and understanding with respect to such persons ; for will is nothing without understanding, and understanding is nothing without will. Such persons form a kind of fictitious will and understanding in a lower region of the mind, leaving the true faculties to a great extent undeveloped, and the capacity of being reformed and regenerated, though seriously injured, yet not undestroyed. This is not, of course, the case with all even of the criminal class ; but it is no doubt true of some. Indeed, the Moabite, in the better aspect of his character, represents one possessed of some natural goodness, which makes him the easy dupe of the designing, to whom he has not the courage to say no.

There are, however, others besides such characters, to whom, as spiritual Moabites, these lines may be applied. The law which required at least two witnesses to put to death, was delivered with immediate reference to the man or the woman who "hath gone and served other gods, and worshipped them, either the sun, or moon, or any of the host of heaven." Scripture does not say that Moab worshipped the heavenly bodies, unless the Moabitish god Chemosh, who is said to have been worshipped under the form of a black star, may be considered to belong to the host of heaven ; but the Mosaic

law included all kinds of idolatry. And the worship of God was an exalted virtue and idolatry a deep crime, because the idea of God enters into all our worship, which comprehensively means all our religion. In profane worship there may be the concurrence of the will and the understanding ; or one may be involved without the other. A gross idolater may be sincerely devout. While his understanding is corrupted, his heart may be sound. He will be measured by one full line to be kept alive. When the heart is idolatrous as well as the understanding, then will the false worshipper be measured by two lines to be put to death. But there is an inward as well as an outward idolatry. Yet even here the line of life may be found to apply. Only when the concurrent testimony of the two inward witnesses is against the idolater, will he be measured with two lines to be put to death. A hopeful doctrine this when we apply it to others ; a solemn one when we apply it to ourselves.

After Moab, David "smote Hadadezer, the son of Rehob, king of Zobah, as he went to recover his border at the river Euphrates." From him David took many thousand chariots, and horsemen, and footmen. And when the Syrians of Damascus came to succour Hadadezer, David slew of the Syrians twenty-two thousand. Zobah was in Syria, so that here was one and the principal of the Syrian princes supporting another. Syria, in its best days, when the second ancient or Hebrew Church was there, signified the knowledge of good, as Syria of rivers signified the knowledge of truth. In the time of Abraham, when he was called out of Ur of the Chaldees, which was in Syria, it had sunk into idolatry, and had therefore corrupted the truth which it once possessed. Syria is thus the intellectual principle, answering to Moab, which has relation to the will. The intellectual character of the Syrians is indicated by their chariots and horsemen, which are symbols of doctrine and intelligence, false it may be.

When David had subdued and made tributary the Syrians of Zobah and Damascus, a third Syrian king, Toi, sent his son to bless David, because he had fought against Hadadezer, and smitten him, because that Hadadezer had wars with Toi. Wars take place in the rational mind itself, which Syria, under one view, signifies, as when one intellectual nation conflicts with another. We have seen that one evil may serve to hold another in check, but cannot remove it. Neither the rational nor the natural mind has the power to reform itself. This can only be done by the spiritual mind. So David ended the wars between the two Syrian kings ; and, while he forced one into submission, led the other to send a friendly message with rich gifts.

One other nation David subdued. "He put garrisons in Edom ; throughout all Edom put he garrisons, and all they of Edom became his servants." The Edomites, the descendants of Esau, had, like the

other nations, degenerated. Therefore, from representing the good of the natural mind, they had come to represent the natural mind under the influence of self-love, which rejects all truth. In putting garrisons throughout all Edom, and making all Edom become his servants, David represented the power and operation of the spiritual mind in placing under the control of spiritual truth all the natural affections that powerfully influence the mind in favour of self as a ruling principle. For those garrisons of the king's forces in the conquered nations around Canaan symbolize the presence of the spiritual mind in the natural by means of truths, which exercise a controlling power over those thoughts and feelings which are inimical to, but not destructive of, the life of love and truth in the soul. Yet this is not a permanent state. The thoughts and feelings which at first are restrained must finally be brought into a friendly relation with the ruling principle of the mind, or be removed. And so we find in the prophets predictions of the ultimate renewal or destruction of the nations generally that David conquered. Here, at least, we have, in the conquests of David, a representative history of a Divine work that is constantly going on in the minds of those who are being regenerated, and a promise of the time when all nations shall serve the Lord, and bring their gifts and offerings to Him as the King of kings and Lord of lords.

CHAPTER XII.

DAVID CHERISHES JONATHAN'S SON.

2 Samuel ix.

DAVID, having subdued his enemies, began to make inquiry after his friends. True to the generous sentiment which he had constantly manifested towards him who had been, almost from first to last, his deadly enemy, "David said, Is there yet any that is left of the house of Saul, that I may show him kindness for Jonathan's sake?" That this inquiry should not have been made until fifteen years after the death of Saul is assumed to have been because not till then could David feel sure that his kingdom was securely established. It seems singular, however, that David should have been ignorant of the very existence of one in whom, had he known of him, he must have felt the liveliest interest, and to whom he had bound himself by a solemn covenant to show kindness. One reason of this may have been, that the descendant of Saul, whom he now discovered, lived in retirement, perhaps in seclusion, lest, as some suppose, he might be treated as a possible rival to the throne. Yet there is some difficulty even here ;

for David's noble conduct on the death both of Saul and of Ish-bosheth, with the tolerance, at least, which he had hitherto manifested towards Saul's sons, might have inspired confidence in his clemency if not in his friendship. There are, however, deeper reasons than any that the circumstances themselves suggest for no one of the house of Saul having been discovered till this time. The sequence of events in sacred history represents the sequence of states in the regenerate life. And evil is to be subdued before good can be attained or brought into manifest existence.

Ziba, a servant of Saul, being brought into David's presence and interrogated respecting Saul's family, answered, "Jonathan hath yet a son, which is lame on his feet." When fetched from the house of Machir, in Lo-debar, which was in Gilead, on the other side Jordan, where he had been long and no doubt lovingly cherished, Mephibosheth fell on his face before David, and he did reverence. And David said unto him, "Fear not : for I will surely show thee kindness for Jonathan thy father's sake, and will restore thee all the land of Saul thy father; and thou shalt eat bread at my table continually."

This son of Jonathan we have had occasion to speak of once before. In the fourth chapter we read that he was five years old when the tidings came of Saul and Jonathan out of Jezreel, and his nurse took him up and fled ; and it came to pass as she made haste to flee, that he fell, and he became lame.

The origin of Mephibosheth's lameness, which had some influence on his fortunes, and has something to do with his representative character, has an interest for us, which invites us to consider it.

In the Scriptures a nurse, as one who nourishes and suckles an infant, properly signifies one who nourishes innocence with the milk of the Word, which is the good of truth. Of this spiritual nourishment, which unites the qualities and virtues of goodness and truth, milk is a beautiful emblem ; for it is at once food and drink, and contains all the elements required for the support and growth of the body, in all its constituent parts. Its provision is a striking instance of the wise beneficence of that Being who created and sustains us ; as His Holy Word is of His love in so mercifully providing for the nourishment and growth of our souls. It is not, therefore, by a figure of speech, but by an exact and beautiful analogy, that the nourishers of the Church are called her nursing fathers and nursing mothers, and that the Church herself is spoken of as the nursing mother of her children. "Rejoice ye with Jerusalem, and be glad with her, all ye that love her : rejoice for joy with her, all ye that mourn for her : that ye may suck, and be satisfied with the breasts of her consolations ; that ye may milk out, and be delighted with the abundance of her glory" (Isa. lvi. 10, 11).

But a nurse has another function besides that of suckling the

children. She takes care of them after they are weaned. And, although children were suckled to a comparatively advanced age in olden times, yet such we may suppose was the office which the nurse held when she fled with her young charge after the fatal battle of Jezreel ; as it was that of Rebekah's nurse, when she accompanied her young mistress, on leaving her father's house to become the wife of Isaac ; and of whom we have the honourable memorial, that when she died, they buried her under an oak, which was called the oak of weeping (Gen. xxxv. 8). But even while a nurse is suckling a child she contributes to the nourishment and growth of his mind as well as of his body. This is mental nursing, and is represented by physical nursing, which it accompanies.

In mental growth there are two different elements that are nourished and, for a time, grow up together. All infants are born in a state of innocence ; and the proper function of those who nurse the mind is to nourish and support that infantile innocence. But while all infants are born in a state of innocence, they are also born with hereditary inclinations to evil, that is, with the natural inclination to love themselves and the world inordinately, or with what may be called ambition and covetousness. However carefully the young may be nurtured, these natural inclinations will increase and strengthen. They are the tares that grow up together with the wheat. We cannot pluck them up, nor would it be wise in us to do so if we could. To the human wisdom that would attempt it, Divine wisdom has said, "Nay ; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest : and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them : but gather the wheat into My barn " (Matt. xiii. 29, 30). Not till man comes under the regenerating influence of the Lord's Spirit can this separation be effected, and then angels, not men, are the reapers. When this change of state comes, then, where there was the natural ambition to be great and be envied by others, there is the spiritual principle, "He that would be greatest among you let him be your servant ;" and where natural covetousness grew there is the heavenly plant of the Father's planting, "Covet the best gifts."

Until the human being can acquire and act from these higher and purer motives, he must act from the lower and grosser. All that can be done and ought to be attempted, is to bring the higher, as they acquire strength, to bear upon the lower, so as to moderate them by their influence. But to attempt to root out all hereditary inclinations that have regard to self and the world, which inspire them, to root out, for instance, youthful emulation, would be equally vain and mischievous. Rather should such inclinations be nursed, by being

supplied with their proper food, and directed, as far as possible, in their exercise, to useful results.

In the more interior sense, in which persons represent principles, a nurse means hereditary evil itself. "Thus hereditary evil yields the young nourishment, until they are able to judge for themselves, and then, if they are regenerated, they are led by the Lord into a state of new infancy, and at length into celestial wisdom, thus into true infancy, or into innocence, for true infancy or innocence dwells in wisdom. The difference is, that the innocence of infancy is without and hereditary evil within, but the innocence of wisdom is within and hereditary evil without. Hence it is that hereditary evil performs as it were the part of a nurse, from first infancy up to the age of new infancy. Hence it is that a nurse signifies hereditary evil, and also the insinuation of innocence through the celestial spiritual principle."

Such a nurse was represented by Rebekah's nurse, and such a nurse was represented by her who fled with the young son of Jonathan, who, by falling in her panic-stricken flight, became lame in both his feet.

What, in the spirit of its meaning, is this lameness? and why should it have happened to the son of Jonathan? The feet are important members of the human body. They are so often spoken of in Scripture in a religious sense, and their analogy is so plain, that no one can mistake their general meaning. "I turned my feet unto Thy testimonies. I refrained my feet from every evil way. Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet" (Ps. cxix. 59, 101, 105). To walk in the Lord's truth (Ps. lxxxvi. 11); to walk in His paths (Isa. ii. 3); is it life according to the teaching of His Word, and thus in the path of righteousness.

Lameness is also spoken of in a religious sense. "Lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; and make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way" (Heb. xii. 12, 13). One of the blessings promised by the Lord's coming was that the lame man should leap as an hart (Isa. xxxv. 6); and although this was literally fulfilled, yet both the prediction and the act have a spiritual meaning. Lameness is either partial or complete; on one side or on both. Our Lord said, "If thy hand or thy foot offend thee, cut them off, and cast them from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into everlasting fire" (Matt. xviii. 8). The hand and the foot are, in this instance, offending members; and from a similar statement it would appear, that it was the right hand or foot that was to be rejected (v. 30). Divine wisdom must have had a meaning in this symbolic teaching. The right and the left sides and members of the human body correspond to what may be called the two sides of the human mind and character, the moral and the intellectual. The right corresponds to the moral

side, the left to the intellectual. How beautifully instructive the Lord's teaching is ! Not the intellectual error but the moral evil is to be cut off and cast from us. Not that error is a matter of indifference, but all serious error has a moral ground, and when that ground is removed, root and branch, the error withers away. But the feet of Mephibosheth, which were lame, do not mean evil and error, but goodness and truth. His lameness was an accident and a misfortune, and represented the loss both of moral and intellectual power, so as to be unable to walk in the ways of truth and goodness.

After the death of the king and his three sons, Mephibosheth, as the son of Jonathan, was the natural representative of the house of Saul. But the battle of Jezreel ended Saul's temporary kingdom, and commenced the enduring kingdom of David. This is described in the Divine promise given to David respecting Solomon : " My mercy shall not depart away from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away before thee. And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee : thy throne shall be established for ever " (2 Sam. vii. 15, 16). All the power of the house of Saul was now, therefore, departed from it, and transferred to the house of David. Mephibosheth, in his state of physical lameness and impotence, represented the house of Saul in its powerless condition. But this accidental and natural analogy is itself representative ; and must be viewed in other than natural light before it can disclose its true Scriptural meaning. For only in the light of God can we see the light of His Word.

Saul, we have seen, represented truth Divine. In its widest sense this includes all Divine truth as received by finite minds, in heaven and in the Church, and even as it was in the mind of the Lord Himself, in the earlier period of His life on earth, while He was making His humanity truth Divine. In a less extended sense, Saul represented truth Divine such as this in the letter of the Word, and specifically the apparent truths of the letter, Jonathan representing its real truths. Jonathan's son now represented both. The letter of the Word consists, of necessity, in a great measure of apparent truths. Everything that comes from God into nature must put on nature. The human soul cannot live and act in the natural world without a natural body. Revelation cannot come from God into the natural world but by clothing itself with a natural sense, adapted to the understandings of men. The letter of the Word is, in the truest sense, a body, in which its spirit dwells, analogous to our own body, as the dwelling-place of the soul. All that in the Word concerns love to the Lord constitutes the heart, all that relates to faith in the Lord forms the lungs, or the spirit. These are the two vital principles which pervade and animate the whole Word, and on which all its truths depend. The highest of

these truths, those which relate to God, are the head ; secondary truths, which relate to the neighbour, are the trunk ; and the moral precepts and laws of duty are the hands and the feet. When all these parts are preserved in their order, connection, and integrity, the Church herself has a sound mind in a sound body. But this is far from being always the case. When the Lord was in the world, He declared to the leaders of the Jewish Church, that they had made the commandment of God of none effect by their tradition (Matt. xv. 6), and that they taught for doctrines the commandments of men (Mark vii. 7). With them the moral and intellectual power of the Word was gone. They neither walked in the truth nor in the good of religion ; they neither performed their duties to God nor to man ; they neither practised sincerity nor integrity ; they devoured widows' houses and for a pretence made long prayers (Matt. xxiii. 14). The foundations were removed, and the kingdom of God among men was threatened with dissolution. In truth, the kingdom as it had been established among the Jews, provisional and temporary as it was, like that of Saul, had come to its end, when a new foundation was to be laid, and an everlasting kingdom established, which was typified by that of David. " Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner-stone, a sure foundation " (Isa. xxviii. 16). " I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth " (Jer. xxiii. 5). " Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon His kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever " (Isa. ix. 7).

There is a profound significance in the Lord being called a foundation and a foundation-stone. The Church on earth is the foundation of the Church in heaven, the literal sense of the Word is the foundation of its spiritual sense, the religious virtues are the foundation of the religious graces. The higher rest upon the lower, unsupported by which they are unsubstantial and evanescent. At the time of the Incarnation all these foundations had given way. The Lord came into the world to lay these foundations anew, and to lay them in such a way that they should never be moved. He laid them deep and sure in the human nature He assumed and glorified. For, in truth, all these foundations exist in man, and have no existence out of him. The Church on earth has no abstract existence. Nor does it exist in creeds and formularies. It has no actual existence but in the hearts and lives of men. This is equally true of the Word itself. As a book it is a mere dead letter. Only when its truths are received into the understanding and hearts of man, as principles and laws of life, has it any actual existence as a power on earth. The religious graces, as

love to God and love to man, have no abstract existence, nor can they exist in the mind alone ; they have no positive existence but in the virtues of a religious life. When these ultimates are wanting, or exist only in a perverted form, the Church and religion, and even the Word itself, as received in the human mind, is as a house built upon the sand, or as a man without the power to walk. This is the condition of truth Divine as represented by the son of Jonathan, who was lame in both his feet.

But David took this child of misfortune under his care and protection, as David's Lord took our infirmities and carried our sorrows ; so that He, as the Word made flesh, became the Word as flesh had made it, perverted and enfeebled. For what do we understand by the Word being made flesh? That He clothed Himself with a fleshly body? He assumed human nature, not merely a human body. And man's nature is human from his having the capacity of knowing and doing the will of God. Yet even this does not, strictly speaking, constitute humanity, but is only the capacity of becoming human. Humanity consists in knowing and doing the will of God. It is this that makes man human. The Lord took upon Him human nature, but He took it, as it had become through sin, maimed and distorted. "His visage was so marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men" (Isa. lii. 14). That only mars and deforms humanity which mars and deforms that which constitutes humanity.

But the Lord took humanity marred and deformed, that He might restore it to more than its original beauty of visage and perfection of form. He made humanity, not only as it is in its greatest possible perfection in men and angels, a form of truth, but He made it the Truth itself in form. This is glorification, and that for which the Lord prayed when He said, "Father, glorify Thou Me with Thine own self with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was" (John xvii. 5). The Lord restored and glorified His humanity in two ways, one external, the other internal. Knowledges, especially the truths of His Word, entered from without, and the life of His indwelling Divinity entered from within ; as Mephibosheth had restored to him all the land of Saul, and was fed continually at the king's table. Our Lord pointed out this distinction regarding Himself. His disciples were gone away into the city to buy food, and on their return, when they pressed Him to eat, He told them that He had meat to eat that they knew not of (John iv. 32).

Mephibosheth, who represented the Lord's frail humanity, as truth Divine, was not indeed restored to soundness ; for the account of his better fortunes closes with the words, "So Mephibosheth dwelt in Jerusalem : for he did eat continually at the king's table ; and was lame on both his feet." But although not restored himself, he was restored in his

son ; for he "had a young son whose name was Micha." And so far as we can rely on the meaning of names, those, in this instance, of parent and child have a happy significance ; for the father's name means "Exterminating the idol," and the son's, "Who is like unto the Lord?"

CHAPTER XIII.

DAVID'S ILL-REQUITED FRIENDSHIP FOR THE KING OF THE AMMONITES.

2 Samuel x.

GREAT events sometimes arise out of trifling circumstances, and bloody wars have been undertaken to redress some small wrong or revenge some slight or fancied insult. "The beginning of strife is as when one letteth out water," says Solomon (Prov. xvii. 14). Or it is like the cloud no bigger than a man's hand, which was quickly followed by a heaven black with clouds and wind, and a great rain (1 Kings xviii. 44, 45). The whole cloud material was there, though invisible ; and a slight electric change was all that was needed to produce a storm. So is it often in our public wars and private contentions. The warlike and contentious spirit is there, and little suffices to let it loose, so as to deluge fields with blood and spread and perpetuate discord among men. But the interest and honour of nations must be maintained, and men must stand upon their personal rights. By all means. But in our times, and with the nations and people of Christendom, let it be on Christian principles. Those who lived in less enlightened ages, and under a less perfect religious dispensation, must be judged by a lower standard.

This chapter of the Book of Samuel gives an exemplification of serious consequences resulting from an apparently slight offence. The king of the children of Ammon died ; and David said, "I will show kindness unto Hanun the son of Nahash, as his father showed kindness unto me. And David sent to comfort him by the hand of his servants for his father." The princes of the Ammonites persuaded the new king that David must have an interested motive in this embassy. "Wherefore Hanun took David's servants, and shaved off the one half of their beards, and cut off their garments in the middle, even to their buttocks, and sent them away." As the men were greatly ashamed, the king said, "Tarry at Jericho until your beards be grown, and then return." The result of this insult was war, first with the Ammonites, aided by the Syrians, in which they were defeated, and next with the Syrians themselves, in which David slew the men of

seven hundred chariots, and forty thousand horsemen, and reduced them to servitude.

There is no account elsewhere of Nahash, the king of Ammon, showing kindness to David. This Nahash is supposed to be the son of the Ammonitish king who, forty years earlier, besieged Jabesh-gilead, which was relieved by Saul. Though an hereditary enemy of Israel, he might show kindness to David, as did Achish, king of the Philistines, while Saul was their common enemy. David, in his prosperity, desired to return to the son the kindness that the father had showed him in his adversity. But why should David desire to cultivate friendly relations with the king of the Ammonites? The children of Ammon were of the nations with whom the children of Israel might make peace, representing, as one of those remote from Canaan, what could be subordinated to right principles. David might, therefore, lawfully send to Hanun a message of condolence on the death of his father. But there was now on the throne of Ammon a king that knew not David, whom his princes easily persuaded to distrust and insult. The treatment to which the king subjected David's messengers was, according to the ideas of the times, most ignominious. Those messengers were no doubt men of rank, whose flowing beards and rich and ample apparel reflected the dignity and grandeur of the court to which they belonged and the king they represented, and were intended to show honour to those to whom they came. To have refused their message, would have been discourteous and unfriendly, but besides this, to send them away with half of their beards shaved off and their garments cut so as to shamefully expose their persons, was certainly a wanton insult and great indignity. Our principal concern is to understand what it means and what instruction it affords.

The hair in general and the beard in particular, and the garments, are so often spoken of in Scripture in what is called a figurative sense, that it is not necessary to show that they have a symbolic meaning. We need only to consider what their meaning is.

It would be an interesting inquiry, why the Creator has given a natural covering to animals, which he has denied to, or but sparingly bestowed on man. Without attempting to discuss so large a subject, a few remarks upon it may be ventured. One of the fathers of the Development theory, while believing that Nature has done all else for man, cannot help thinking that we must recognise the hand of God in this. According to this admission, man's peculiar condition in this respect is at least evidence of design. This we need not stop to consider. We do not so much desire to know its economical purpose, as to ascertain its secondary cause, and thence its meaning. First of all, it implies, because it necessitates, the existence in man of a reasoning

power. The being who is thus circumstanced, and has to provide what his condition requires, must see the connection between end and means, and between cause and effect. May not that mental power which sees the bodily need and exerts itself to supply it, have had some share, as a secondary cause, in producing it? All creatures are the organized forms of their own nature. They are made for the life they are intended to lead. Their whole structure, even to the hair, and feathers, and scales with which they are covered, is a development of their nature, and an adaptation to their mode of life. The animal soul clothes itself with an animal body, in every particular its own image, and therefore its own instrument. This is equally true of man. The human soul clothes itself with a human body, because this is its form, its image, its instrument. But there is this important difference between an animal and a man. An animal is born with all the knowledge which its nature requires. Man is born only with the faculty of acquiring knowledge, not with any undeveloped fund of knowledge, yet with the inflowing light of discernment. Animals are born with clothed minds, and as a consequence they are born with clothed bodies. They neither sow nor reap, nor toil nor spin to feed and clothe their bodies, because neither labour nor skill is required of them to feed and clothe their minds. The Creator has given man a naked body because He has given him an unclothed mind. Man has, by study and labour, to acquire knowledge, and clothe his mind with ideas; and as a consequence, he has to acquire the materials and form them into garments for his body. In brief, the clothing of animals grows out of their bodies because their knowledge grows out of their minds. Man has to acquire and put raiment on his body, because he has to acquire and put garments on his mind. It is on this ground that there is an analogy between the knowledge that clothes the mind and the garments that clothe the body.

Yet the human body is not left without a natural covering entirely. The head in all, and the lower part of the face in man, have a covering for beauty and glory. This, too, has its origin in correspondence. The celestial degree of the mind, to which the head corresponds, is in its nature and activity spontaneous. The men of the celestial Church did not, and the celestial angels do not, like the spiritual, lay up their truths in the memory and their garments in the wardrobe, and put them on as occasion requires. The celestials apply the truths they acquire immediately to the life. There is an important difference, however, between the hair of the head and the beard. The hair of the head comes by birth, the beard comes with manhood. And as the period of manhood is that in which reason asserts its power and assumes its sway, and as man, by the exercise of his reason, passes from knowledge into intelligence, therefore the beard is the emblem

of intelligence, as indeed the face is of the rational mind, out of which it grows.

As knowledge is to the mind what clothing is to the body, this is the Scripture meaning of garments. But that to which they correspond is the knowledge of Divine and spiritual things, or, truth as the vesture of goodness. As the hair and the garments serve a similar use, they have a similar meaning. There is this difference: the hair corresponds to that truth which celestial goodness puts forth, and garments correspond to those truths which spiritual goodness puts on; one comes by immediate, the other by mediate influx, or, one comes from within, the other from without.

One more particular respecting the hair and the garments. As a covering for the body they answer to the ultimate truths of the mind, in which its inward principles terminate, and which preserve them in their integrity and connection. So that when those ultimate truths are removed, the effects on the mind are like those which the removal of the hair and garments would have on the body. Besides being exposed to injuries, the vital heat would be dissipated, and disease would in all probability speedily bring its existence to a close. So with the mind.

Hanun did not, however, denude David's messengers entirely of their hair and garments. His purpose was not so much to injure as to insult, to express contempt for the king of Israel, and cast ridicule upon his servants. The Ammonitish king and his advisers were like those who not only refuse to receive the messengers of the King of kings, the prophets and evangelists, but who heap up contempt and ridicule upon them. Their mode of manifesting their contempt is very significant. They shaved off half the men's beards and cut their garments in the middle. In its evil sense, to halve is to divide, to divide is to dissipate, and to dissipate is to destroy. The act of king Hanun represents, therefore, a state of antagonism to Divine and spiritual truth of a very decided and hopeless kind. Simple denial of revealed religion, deeply mistaken though it is, may be sincere, and resolved upon after serious reflection. But when denial not only refuses to listen to the message of peace and goodwill, but treats the messengers with contempt and ridicule, unbelief is not only intellectual but moral denial. It is like the treatment to which the Lord Himself was subjected in the Prætorium, when, with daring derision, they took off His own garments and dressed Him in a purple robe, and put a crown upon His head and a reed in His hand, and saluted Him with, Hail, King of the Jews! Another representative act of those who crucified the Lord more formally resembles that of Hanun to the messengers of David, and has a similar meaning. The soldiers parted the Lord's garment. They did not indeed divide it in two but four parts; but

four has often the same meaning as two, the multiples of numbers having the same general meaning as the roots. The Lord's outer garment, which was the one the soldiers divided, represented, in relation to Him as the Word, the literal sense of the Word, which contains, supports, and preserves its Divine and spiritual senses; and when that is rent and divided, it is practically destroyed; and the higher truths which express themselves through the lower, though, like the Lord's seamless garment, preserved entire, are disposed of by the providential decision of the lot, so as to save it from division and profanation. For profanation is one of the evils represented by division, and is one of the evils represented by the Ammonites. But how do the evil divide the truth? Not as the workman, who has shown himself approved unto God, rightly divides the Word of truth (2 Tim. ii. 15), giving to every one according to his capacity. The division of truth by the evil is not the apposition, but the opposition, of truth to truth, and especially of truth and goodness. But how can one truth be brought into conflict with another truth? With the letter of Scripture this can be done, and often is done, by placing its apparent truths in opposition to its real truths, which produces a seeming contradiction. Some also who reject the Word of God, do so, partly at least, on the ground that its tendency, if not its teaching, is immoral, and that its human authors, besides whom they acknowledge no other, under the guise of doing men service, seek only to seduce and enslave them; just as the princes of the children of Ammon suggested to Hanun their lord, "Thinkest thou that David doth honour thy father, that he hath sent comforters unto thee? hath not David rather sent his servants unto thee, to search the city, and to spy out, and to overthrow it?" The Ammonites, we have said, represented those who profane truth—those who maintain, not only that the truths of the Scriptures are divided against themselves, but that they are hostile to goodness, because they lead men to neglect their true interests in this world in order to secure an imaginary happiness in a world which has no existence.

It is true there is a deeper kind of profanation than this, which is committed by those who first believe the truth and then deny it. This arises, not from a change of mind only, but from a change of heart. No one who has really believed the truth of God can reject it unless his faith has been undermined by evil. Yet we must draw a distinction between the truth as it is revealed in the Word of God, and as it is represented to be in human creeds. These forms of faith may be matter of belief and afterwards of denial, without the truth itself being absolutely rejected.

But there are the victims as well as the subjects of this unbelief to be considered, the messengers of David as well as the princes of

Hanun. Viewed abstractly, these represented the truths themselves which the spiritual Ammonites profane, the prophets and apostles as present with us in their writings. But the messengers of David represent also those who acknowledge the truth, which the prophets and apostles have written, those who are in the faith of the truth, and belong to the Lord's kingdom. How do these suffer injury from those represented by the Ammonites? and how is the injury to be repaired?

Two circumstances recorded in the earlier part of the Hebrew Scriptures will help us to understand the nature of the injury sustained by David's servants. When Joseph's brethren sold him to the Ishmeelites, they stripped him of his coat, which they made use of to deceive their father and conceal their own wickedness. When Joseph fled in horror from the enticements of his mistress, she caught hold of and retained his garment, which she employed as evidence against him, so that he was cast into prison. The spiritual meaning of these circumstances is this. When the faithful are deprived of ultimate truth, they are left unprotected; and that which was given as a defence is even turned in the hands of their enemies into a testimony against them. How is this? Those who are opposed to the truth of Scripture seize on the apparent truths of the letter, and employ them to invalidate its real truths, and thus to prove what is false to be true, and what is good to be evil; as Joseph's enemies did in regard to him. It is a cause of great distress to the faithful to see what they hold sacred thus profaned, by men seizing and mutilating the ultimate truths of the Word, to show that the teaching of the Holy Book is neither true nor good. And not the least dangerous enemies of revealed truth are some of its professed friends, whose laboured criticisms and materialistic systems of interpretation tend to degrade the Word to the level of a common writing, composed by men with views as different as were those of the times in which they lived. This, it is true, affects only the letter of the Word. But the letter of the Word is the clothing of its spirit. And when that is marred and severed from its spirit, which is the Spirit of God, it has breathed into it the spirit of man, which is that of its human interpreter.

But in the Scriptures these oppositions of the false to the true and the evil to the good are, in the spiritual sense, descriptive of oppositions in the mind itself, as inward trials of faith and love. In the mind of the spiritual man, or of him who is becoming spiritual, doubts and difficulties arise on those very points and questions, which the natural man settles either by an easy or elaborate negation. There is no solid and settled faith without intellectual conflict, no deep and abiding love without moral temptations. The Egyptian and the Philistine, the Moabite and the Ammonite have all to be encountered and overcome in the errors and evils which they represent. The Ammonitish

principle assails us when we are tempted to doubt the Divinity and spirituality of the Word, on the ground covered by the question, How can that be, in its essence, Divine and spiritual, which, in its form, is, in many instances, so human as to be inconsistent and contradictory, and so natural as to be concerned with the affairs of this world only? These are doubts to which the young Christian is perhaps most liable. He looks at the Word more with the eye of science than with that of spiritual discernment. It is but right that he should. By all means let him bring his scientific faculty and knowledge to bear upon the Scriptures. But let him not trust to these alone. There is, however, a time, or rather a state, in the experience of every earnest inquirer, even when he inquires in an affirmative spirit, when these doubts are so prominent and so powerful as seemingly to deprive him of half his faith. It is a favourable sign if, in this state of mind, which seems to be forced upon him, he feels distressed and ashamed. There is the sure ground of hope in such a state of mind. It prepares it for hearing and following the counsel that will repair the temporary loss he has suffered, and restore him to a more perfect spiritual faith. The counsel to such tempted ones is that given by David to his insulted messengers: "Tarry at Jericho until your beards be grown, and then return."

Jericho was the first city to which the children came after they had crossed the Jordan and entered the Promised Land. As in passing through the Jordan the Israelites received a second baptism, the first being that unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea (1 Cor. x. 2), these two answering to the baptism of John and that of Jesus; and as those who pass through baptism are to be instructed in the truth of Jesus and to enter on a new life, instruction in new and higher truths, and a new life in accordance with them, were represented by Jericho. What, then, are the truths instruction in which are the requisite means for restoring to the intellect the intelligence and power of faith?

To those whose scientific faculty and knowledge have brought them into distrustful doubt, there is a science which will resolve all scientific doubt, because it enters into and enlightens all science. The science of Correspondence is the science of sciences. Creation was framed, and the Word of God was written, according to the law of correspondence. This explains the nature of the connection which exists between God the Creator and His works, and between God the Revealer and His revelation. It explains the nature of the connection which exists between the works of God and His Word, and between the different parts of these with each other. Correspondence is the universal bond that holds all things in connection and in harmony with God and with each other. We all acknowledge the intimate connection that exists between the words and works of men. If a man

is perfectly sincere, his words and his works are but two different modes of expressing his mind. His will and understanding are manifested equally in both ; and each might be translated into the other. Few seem to think that there is as perfect a connection or correspondence between the words and the works of God. Yet this must absolutely be the case. The correspondence between Creation and Revelation being perfect, we should regard them both in the same way. If we look at the works of God only sensually and superficially, we see many things under an appearance which is widely different from, and sometimes opposite to, the reality. Where would have been the science of astronomy if men had never looked up into the heavens with any other eye but that of sense? Where would have been the science of geology if men had never looked deeper than the surface of the earth? On the same ground, where would true theology be if men looked no deeper into the book of God than the letter? Besides these and other intellectual considerations that counteract the influence of negative reasoning from science, there is a moral consideration of the very highest importance in the settlement of doubts. "If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God" (John vii. 17). "He that is of God heareth God's words" (viii. 47). These are among the lessons we have to learn for the strengthening of our faith, in a state of trial such as that represented by the sufferings of the messengers of the king of Israel to the king of the Ammonites.

Although David must have felt keenly the insult that had been offered him by Hanun, he does not appear to have meditated any swift revenge. The Ammonites were the first to move ; and in doing so, they perhaps only anticipated what they knew must happen. "When the children of Ammon saw that they stank before David, the children of Ammon sent and hired the Syrians of Beth-rehob, and the Syrians of Zoba, twenty thousand footmen, and of king Maacah a thousand men, and of Ish-tob twelve thousand men." Against these combined forces David sent Joab, who defeated them, and returned to Jerusalem. But the Syrians gathered themselves together again. "And Hadarezer sent, and brought out the Syrians that were beyond the river : and they came to Helam." There David himself at the head of the Israelitish army met them, and slew the men of seven hundred chariots and forty thousand horsemen. Then "all the kings that were servants to Hadarezer made peace with Israel, and served them. So the Syrians feared to help the children of Ammon any more."

It would occupy too much space to enter into the particulars of this narrative. We have recently seen David engaged in war with several of the Syrian nations, whom he conquered and made tributary. But the same spiritual evil, like the same natural enemy, is not always,

when once defeated, entirely subdued. Old evils enter into new combinations, and call up others to strengthen their forces. For there is a confederacy between things evil as there is a connection or confederacy between things good. David speaks of this in the Psalms : "Thine enemies make a tumult : . . . they are confederate against Thee : the tabernacles of Edom, and the Ishmaelites ; of Moab, and the Hagarenes ; Gebal, and Ammon, and Amalek ; the Philistines with the inhabitants of Tyre ; Assur also is joined with them ; they have holpen the children of Lot" (lxxxiii. 2, 5-8). Almost all the nations which have appeared in the historical part of the Word on which we have been engaged, are introduced here, and they are all confederate against God, to help the children of Lot, as the Syrians are here. But not only do evils and falsities become confederate among themselves, but evil becomes confederate with good and falsity with truth. "Syria is confederate with Ephraim," is recorded of a time in the Jewish history which represented the Church in the last stage of its decline, and is therefore followed by the Divine promise, "Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son" (Isa. vii. 2, 14). The mixture of principles in their nature opposite is the worst kind of profanation. But even in these times, and in the worst states of temptation, the faithful have an unfailing support and guide, sufficient, if they but trust and follow Him, to overcome all the power of the enemy, and to break up the confederacy so far, at least, as that the Syrians shall fear to help the children of Ammon any more.

CHAPTER XIV.

DAVID'S GREAT SIN.

2 Samuel xi.

It is impossible long to peruse the record of human transactions without having cause to mourn over the frailty of human nature. History, both sacred and secular, is, to a considerable extent, a record of the vices and follies of mankind. It was meet that the Book which reveals the origin of evil and the fall of man, should trace the evil through its devious course, and exhibit the consequences of the fall in the darker doings of corrupt humanity. However painful these may be to our better feelings, and indelicate some of them may seem to our conventional sentiments, they are all capable of producing beneficial effects, when rightly contemplated. The purpose of Revelation, in recording such transactions, is to place crime before us, not only as evil, but as sin ; to point it out, not only as a breach of the laws of man,

but as a violation of the laws of God ; to show us that the Lord has placed our secret sins in the light of His countenance ; and that the sinner, though he may be above the reach of human authority, shall not escape the judgment of a righteous God.

A striking exemplification of this is given in the case of David in the double crime he committed in the matter of Bathsheba.

There are some reflections that can hardly fail to arise in our minds in reading the narrative of David's sins, and which it may be necessary to consider before proceeding to speak of its more interior sense.

It may not be necessary to employ much time in meeting the not uncommon objection, How, viewing such conduct, can David have been called a man after God's own heart ? It is abundantly proved that this could not have been affirmed of him in regard to his personal, but his official and representative character ; for it is not the man but the function that represents. This is evident from David's own treatment of Saul, whom he regarded and treated as the Lord's anointed.

There is another and still more serious difficulty. How could David, in such acts as those of which he had been guilty, represent the Lord, or even the regenerate man ? The fact, which has been already stated, must be kept in mind, that evil actions committed by representative men represent, in the Lord and in the regenerate, not acts but temptations. Nor are they to be understood as temptations to commit those very acts of which David and others were guilty ; but temptations which have a much deeper ground, and go much more to the root of evil, which grows up and branches out into the numerous forms of sin that men commit. All evil has its primary root in self-love, which is the opposite of love to God. Love to God is the root of all goodness, for even love to the neighbour grows out of love to God. And these two loves comprehend all goodness, for on them hang all the law and the prophets. In like manner the love of the world grows out of the love of self ; and these two loves comprehend all that is opposed to goodness, for all evils are opposed to the law and the prophets. As love to God thus comprehends all religion, the love of self comprehends all irreligion ; as the one includes all righteousness, the other includes all unrighteousness. What the apostle calls sins of the flesh have their root in self-love as truly as any other sins. Self-love is at the root of whatever we do to gratify our own desires without regard to the welfare and happiness of others. And what can be more greedily and basely selfish than to gratify the lust of the flesh at the expense of all that is most precious to a human being upon earth, not to speak of the effects which are spiritual and may be eternal ?

It is in this way we are to look at sin and at temptation. Christian temptation is not simply that which comes from external objects,

exciting our desires and alluring us to sinful acts. These no doubt are temptations. But real spiritual temptations may be endured without externally exciting causes, if causes they can be called, for they are rather the occasions than the causes of sin. The causes, as well as the ends, are within us. Unless these are removed, sin is never put away; the axe is never laid at the root of the tree; we are content to try to lop off the branches. Temptation goes to the root of evil, to the end and the cause; and not until we endure and overcome such temptations are we in the true way of being perfected by suffering. The Lord took upon Him all our hereditary evils, which had their root in His maternal humanity. That root descended, so to speak, into the lowest hell, from which, through that hereditary root, His deepest and direst temptations came, and in overcoming which He carried His redeeming power to the very root of evil and to the lowest depths of Satan; so that He is now able to succour them that are tempted, however severe their temptations may be.

In the transaction we have been considering, David committed the two greatest crimes of which a man can be guilty, and they must therefore have represented the Lord's deepest temptations. To see the true nature of the two evils he committed, and so to understand something of the depth of the temptations they represented, we must inquire into their spiritual origin. And this we cannot better ascertain than in the Writings of the Church:—

“The origin of love truly conjugal is the love of the Lord towards the Church, whence the Lord is called in the Word the Bridegroom, and the Church the bride and wife. From this marriage the Church is a Church, both in general and in particular; and the Church in particular is the man in whom the Church is. Hence it is evident that the conjunction of the Lord with the man of the Church is the very origin of true conjugal love. How that conjunction is the origin of this love shall be explained. The conjunction of the Lord with the man of the Church is the conjunction of goodness and truth. From the Lord is goodness, and with man is truth. Hence the conjunction is called the heavenly marriage, from which exists love truly conjugal between married partners who are in the conjunction of goodness and truth from the Lord. Hence it is first evident that love truly conjugal is from the Lord alone, and with those who are in the conjunction of goodness and truth from Him. Now since the origin of conjugal love is the marriage of goodness and truth, which is heaven, it is manifest that the origin of the love of adultery is the marriage of evil and falsity, which in its essence is hell. Heaven is marriage, because all who are in the heavens are in the marriage of goodness and truth; and hell is adultery, because all who are in the hells are in the marriage of evil and falsity. Hence it follows that marriage and adultery are

as opposite to each other as heaven and hell. The love of marriage corresponds to the love of the supreme heaven, which is love to the Lord from the Lord, and the love of adultery corresponds to the love of the lowest hell. The reason why the love of marriage is so holy and celestial is that it commences from the Lord Himself in the inmost parts of man, and descends according to order to the ultimate parts of the body, and thereby fills the whole man with celestial love, and induces in him a form of Divine love, which form is the form of heaven, and is an image of the Lord. But the love of adultery commences from the ultimate parts of man, and from an impure lascivious fire there, and thence, contrary to order, penetrates towards the interiors, always into man's selfhood, which is nothing but evil, and induces therein a form of hell, which is an image of the devil.

"The good works of chastity which concern married partners are, spiritual and celestial loves, intelligence and wisdom, innocence and peace, power and protection against the hells. The evils consequent upon adulteries are opposite to these. Instead of spiritual and celestial loves are infernal and diabolical loves ; instead of intelligence and wisdom there are insanities and follies ; instead of innocence and peace are deceit and no peace ; instead of power and protection against hell are demons themselves, and the hells ; and instead of beauty there is deformity. . . . Adulteries correspond to the adulterations and defilements of goodness and truth." So far respecting David's violation of one commandment. What is involved in his violation of the other ?

"In the spiritual celestial sense, Thou shalt not kill, means, Thou shalt not take away from man the faith and love of God, and thereby his spiritual life, this being homicide itself ; for by virtue of this life man is man, the life of the body serving thereto as the instrumental cause serves the principal cause. From this spiritual homicide moral homicide is derived, wherefore he who is in the one is also in the other ; for he who wills to take away man's spiritual life, is in hatred against him if he cannot take it away, for he hates his faith and love, and thus the man himself. Spiritual homicide, which is that of faith and love ; moral homicide, which is that of fame and honour ; and natural homicide, which is that of the body, are consequent in a series, one from the other, as cause and effect. Since all who are in hell are in hatred against the Lord, and thence in hatred against heaven, for they are against goodness and truth, therefore hell is the very homicide or murderer itself, whence homicide or murder proceeds. The reason is this : man is man from the Lord through the reception of goodness and truth, wherefore to destroy goodness and truth is to destroy what constitutes humanity itself, thus to kill the man."

But there is this to be taken into consideration in regard to David's

sins. The principles which have been stated are absolutely true in themselves, but the guilt attaching to those who act against them is in proportion to the moral and spiritual light they enjoy. Under the Jewish dispensation men did not see the sinfulness of such violations of the law so clearly as Christians do. Indeed polygamy, which the law sanctioned, and in which they lived, was inconsistent with the true idea of marriage, and therefore with a clear conception of the sinfulness of violating its sanctity ; and comparatively little value was then set on human life, because they had but an obscure notion of the soul and of its eternal existence. To us who live under a higher dispensation, to which the true nature and the sanctity of marriage, and the true nature of the soul and of the future life, have been so fully made known, the lessons which these sins teach are most solemn.

We see from the teaching of the Writings how holy marriage is, and how great is the sin of those who violate its sanctity ; how precious the soul of man is, and how sinful it is to destroy its spiritual life. The violation of what is most holy and the destruction of what is most precious lie at the root of David's two sins. The two spiritual evils are most destructive of the Church, as the two natural evils are of human society. They are the evils in which the spirits of darkness are most deeply involved ; and are the most directly and deeply opposed to the love of God and man, in which the angels of heaven are principled, and which they embody most perfectly in the sanctity of marriage, and in the intense love of the human soul, which makes them all ministering spirits ; and inspires them with joy over every sinner that repents. In short, heaven and hell are opposed to each other as life and death, purity and impurity.

Now the Lord in His temptations had the angels with Him although He took nothing from them ; because, as His maternal humanity brought Him into connection with all the hells, His Paternal humanity brought Him into connection with all the heavens ; so that while the Lord as the Redeemer was conquering the hells, He was at the same time and in the same degree ordinating the heavens ; and in this way establishing the equilibrium between heaven and hell, on which the spiritual freedom of the human race, because of the human will, depends. But as hell could not be subdued, so heaven could not be ordained, without conflict. The angels of heaven as well as the spirits of hell retain the selfhood, or proprium, which is the ground of their conscious existence as individual human beings. This in its very nature is opposed to the Divine, but only in the way that the centrifugal force of the planets is opposed to the centripetal or attractive force of the sun. If the planets had not the tendency to fly off from the sun as their centre they would fall into it, and could therefore have no individual separate existence ; and if the sun did not

attract them, they would fly off into space, and be lost or destroyed. So comparatively with God and man. God, as man's Creator, has given him a selfhood, as the ground of his individuality, which, from its very nature, tends outwards, away from the Author of his existence and Fountain of his life ; but his Creator exerts an attractive force which is equal to the contrary force exerted by the creature. This applies when man is in a state of order. For, unlike the planet, man has free-will, and can overcome the attractive force of Divine love, and wander away into the spiritual region of darkness and death. That region is hell ; for hell is nothing more than wilful separation from God, and determined opposition to Him, and to all that is with Him, therefore to His kingdom on earth and in heaven. Angels are with the Lord, and yet their selfhood is against Him. In this is grounded the singular fact that, in the great work of redemption, the Lord was tempted even by the angels, nay, that the severest of His temptations were from that source. And this, in the highest sense, is involved in David's temptation in the matter of Bathsheba.

But in effecting redemption the Lord had a work to perform in His Church on earth as well as in His Church in heaven. Redemption included among its immediate objects the establishment of a Church on earth, as the basis of the Church in heaven, and as the means of saving souls, and thus supplying heaven with inhabitants. And in the internal sense it is to this that the history of David and Bathsheba relates.

Bathsheba was the wife of Uriah the Hittite. "The Hittites were among the better sort of inhabitants of the land of Canaan, as may appear from the circumstance that Abraham dwelt among them, and afterwards Isaac and Jacob, and were also buried there ; and they behaved themselves with piety and modesty towards Abraham, as is manifest from Genesis xxiii. Hence it is that this people, as a well-disposed nation, represented the spiritual Church. But it came to pass with them, as with the rest of the nations who composed the ancient Church, that in process of time they declined from charity or the good of faith, and hence they afterwards signified the false principle of the Church, as in Ezekiel xvi. 3, 45 (where Jerusalem is reproached with her father having been an Amorite and her mother a Hittite). Still the Hittites were among the more honourable, as may appear from the consideration that Hittites were attendant on David, as Ahimelech (1 Sam. xxvi. 6), and Uriah (2 Sam. xi. 3), whose wife was Bathsheba, of whom David had Solomon." But the circumstance that has more particular relation to the present subject is the burial of Sarah, Abraham's wife, in the land of the Hittites, who were the children of Heth. Sarah died in Hebron, which we have seen represented the spiritual Church ; and there Abraham buried her in the field of Ephron.

“And the field, and the cave that is therein, were made sure unto Abraham for a possession of a burying-place by the son of Heth.” Sarah represented the Church, and burial signifies resurrection. Abraham burying Sarah among the children of Heth, was representative of the Lord raising up a Church among the Gentiles, when the former Church had expired. This Church was also represented by Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah the Hittite. It may be difficult to see how a criminal connection can represent anything that is good. And yet we know there are in Scripture things evil that are types of things good, and things false that are types of things true. This seeming inconsistency originates in the circumstance that evil is the perversion of good, and falsity is the perversion of truth; and when the perversion is removed the good and the truth remain. Evil and falsity have no original or independent existence. Evil is nothing without reference to good, falsity is nothing without reference to truth. If there had been no such thing as good, there could have been no such thing as evil; if there had been no such thing as truth, there would have been no such thing as error or falsity. On this ground the connection between Lot and his daughters had a good as well as a bad representation; so had that between Judah and his daughter-in-law Tamar, through whom, as afterwards through the harlot Rahab, came the seed royal, and finally the Messiah. Although, naturally, this tells us that on the Lord was made to rest, by hereditary transmission, the iniquity of us all; yet, spiritually, the Lord’s progenitors represented the remains of goodness and truth, of all kinds and degrees, which the Lord acquired from His birth upwards. David’s first connection with Bathsheba represented the conjunction which existed between the Lord and the Gentiles before the Church, in its true sense, was established amongst them. The universal Church has, indeed, in all times and under all dispensations, included the Gentiles, since it includes all who are in the good of their religion, whatever that religion may be. But Gentile good, though not false, is spurious, because it is good unenlightened and unpurified, like the good of childhood. Yet that good, like the good of childhood, is very beautiful to look upon, as Bathsheba was; and although it is not pure, it desires purity, and employs such means of purification as the Gentiles possess, or as the Church may indirectly supply, as the woman was washing herself when David from the roof of his house beheld her. The conjunction of the Lord with the Gentiles, when the Church was established among them, was represented by the connection that existed between David and Bathsheba when she became his wife, the marriage of the Lord and the Church being the result of the union of goodness and truth; for Gentile good becomes Christian good when it is enlightened and purified by, and united to, Christian truth. The

fruits of these two dissimilar conjunctions were represented by the child born, whom the Lord smote that he died, and by Solomon the wise, who succeeded David on the throne. All good is from the Lord ; but good from the Lord is not genuine good in us unless it is united to truth, and the fruit of such good has not true spiritual life in it. When good is united to truth, then, from this union, which is the heavenly marriage, the fruit of wisdom and righteousness is produced.

Such is a general view of the spiritual meaning of this inspired record, which, while it stands as a great moral and religious warning, teaches a high spiritual truth.

As all evil is, as far as possible, turned by Divine providence to some substantial good, this evil has produced some results that may be profitable to the Church in all future times. To David's crime we owe the penitential psalm, through which the prostrate sinner breathes the very language of a broken and contrite heart ; and which assuredly shows the royal sinner's repentance to have been sincere and deep. One should never read the account of David's crime without reading also the utterance of his contrition. It would do much to temper the severity of our judgment respecting him, and to diffuse over our minds a feeling of reverential awe in the presence of Him who alone can give us power to resist temptation as well as grant us pardon for our sins. The fifty-first psalm is so perfectly full of the beauties of holiness, and they are linked together in such perfect harmony, that it seems like doing violence to the whole to part them asunder.

Another benefit the Church has received from David's sin is that beautiful lesson of active piety and wise resignation which he displayed, one during the illness, the other at the death, of his child. "The Lord struck the child that Uriah's wife bare unto David, and it was very sick. David therefore besought God for the child ; and David fasted, and went in, and lay all night upon the earth." On the seventh day the child died, and his servants feared to tell him that the child was dead, concluding that, as he refused all comfort while the child was yet alive, he would vex himself much more on hearing of his death. But David acted a wiser and more consistent part. When David perceived from his servants' whisperings what they feared to tell, he rose from the earth, and anointed himself, and changed his apparel, and came into the house of the Lord, and worshipped : then he came to his own house ; and when he required, they set bread before him, and he did eat. When his servants remarked on this strange conduct, he said, "While the child was yet alive, I fasted and wept ; for I said, Who can tell whether God will be gracious to me, that the child may live ? But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast ? can I bring him back again ? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me." This is conduct which Christians would do well to imitate, and

the reasons on which it was grounded Christians would do wisely to adopt as their own. Under David's circumstances, earnest prayer and pious resignation are equally dutiful and perfectly consistent. While there is hope we may send up the prayer of faith. Yet even in this prayer there should be resignation, whether unuttered or expressed, as in the words of the Lord Himself, "nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt." When the issue is no longer uncertain, what should be our course but meek and quiet submission? It is hard to part with the objects of our love, who are a part of ourselves and of our very life. But wherefore should we afflict our souls? We cannot bring one of them back. And we can say with more enlightened views of life and immortality, and with a brighter hope than David had, "I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me."

CHAPTER XV.

GOD'S MESSAGE AND NATHAN'S PARABLE.

2 Samuel xii.

IT is not perhaps desirable to enter into the particulars of this painful history, the bare mention of which is sufficient to rend our hearts, and impel us, like the lepers of old, to cry, Unclean, unclean. For the moral leprous spot, which broke out in this representative man, is exhibited in Scripture, not only to warn us against such uncleanness, but to remind us that we all inherit the propensity to which he yielded in temptation. We will consider David's double crime as so expressively described in the parable of Nathan, when that prophet was sent by the Lord to reprove David for his sin, and pronounce the judgment of Divine justice against him. The exposition has appeared elsewhere, but this is the place it originally occupied.

David had now accomplished his object. Bathsheba had become his wife. This was more than he originally intended. But this result of his sinful indulgence had been forced upon him by the self-denial of a faithful servant, who had forfeited his life to his continency. Whether David's conscience was entirely at ease we know not. He had added iniquity to his sin. But he had done it secretly. No one knew of his dark device but Joab. And he was too faithful a representative of the rational faculty, which easily becomes the servile instrument of an overmastering passion. Had David's crime been generally known, he might have been pricked by the stings of that social or conventional conscience which we call shame. But as it was hid from men, David seems to have felt as if his were hid in his own

heart. But there was an eye, that eye to which all things lie open, that was ever upon him, and that looked through him, in the motions of his criminal passion, and in the schemings of his fertile brain. "The thing that David had done displeased the Lord. And the Lord sent Nathan unto David." The presence of Nathan did not call David's sin to his remembrance, and it was not the prophet's purpose to charge him directly with it. He adopted a more prudent course, and one that was eminently successful, not only of convicting but convincing the king of his guilt.

The kings of Israel, like those of most other nations of that period, were the judges as well as the rulers of their people. The prophet availed himself of this circumstance to perform his important but delicate mission with the greatest certainty of success. He appeared in the presence of the Israelitish monarch as a claimant for justice to an injured Israelite. Addressing the royal judge, he took up his parable, and said, "There were two men in one city; the one rich, and the other poor. The rich man had exceeding many flocks and herds: but the poor man had nothing, save one little ewe lamb, which he had bought and nourished up: and it grew up together with him, and with his children; it did eat of his own meat, and drank of his own cup, and lay in his bosom, and was unto him as a daughter. And there came a traveller unto the rich man, and he spared to take of his own flock and of his own herd, to dress for the wayfaring man; but took the poor man's lamb, and dressed it for the man that was come to him." On hearing the recital of this heartless act of cruelty and oppression, David's anger was greatly kindled against the man, and he said to Nathan, "As the Lord liveth, the man that hath done this thing shall surely die: and he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity." By this righteous decree the first object of the prophet was attained. The royal judge had admitted the justice of the poor man's cause, and had pronounced sentence against his rich oppressor. While David's zeal for justice and his generous indignation against the rich man were yet hot, the prophet, with the authority and power of a messenger from the Judge of all the earth, pronounced in his ears the awful words, "THOU art the man. Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, I anointed thee king over Israel, and I delivered thee out of the hand of Saul; and I gave thee thy master's house, and thy master's wives into thy bosom, and gave thee the house of Israel and of Judah. Wherefore hast thou despised the commandment of the Lord, to do evil in His sight? Thou hast killed Uriah with the sword, and taken his wife to be thy wife."

No case could more strikingly point the moral delivered in the writings of the Apostle, "He that judgeth another judges himself when he doeth the same things."

All men have a perception of abstract justice. In some it may be clearer than in others, but in none is it entirely wanting. In a certain sense, and to a certain extent, the Divine law is still written on the human mind, though unhappily not now upon the human heart; and written too with the finger of God; for He is the Author of every perception which the mind has of right and wrong, of justice and injustice. And not only has every one a perception of abstract justice, but he is able, almost unerringly, to apply it for the regulation of his own conduct. By the power of reflex judgment he can see that, in condemning any evil in another, he condemns that evil in himself. The same power enables him to apply a still more comprehensive law, the law of equity, "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them." This, it is true, is not only a natural but a revealed law: it is "the law and the prophets." But the laws of nature and of revelation are in harmony; for the same God is the Author of both. Were man in a state of nature, by which we mean a state of order, such as that in which he was created, he would have the law of his nature, which is the law of God, written in his heart, and would require no outward revelation. But having departed from his original state, the law, which he had effaced from the table of his heart, was written for his use upon tables of stone. And even now, by the united operation of the Lord's Spirit from within, and of His written law from without, every man of sound mind has the power of discerning between right and wrong, and of applying the law of equity, both in judging and in acting. But in the practical part, how often and gravely do we fail! Clearly as we can see justice in the abstract, our passions and prejudices seriously warp our judgment in its application, making us lynx-eyed in detecting others' faults, but strangely blind to our own, and greatly indisposing us to do to others as we would that others should do to us.

Strikingly and painfully was this exemplified in the case of David, when, in the name of the God of justice, he pronounced the decree of death and restitution against the rich man who had deprived his poor neighbour of his one ewe lamb, while he himself was stained with the crimes of adultery and murder, for which he had made no restitution either to God or man.

We cannot plead, in behalf of the Israelitish king, that, while he knew the moral law, he had not the means of acquiring the moral principle. At the time his judgment and his actions were so much at variance, he recognised the moral law as the law of God. Nor can we, on the other hand, plead that he only fell through the weakness of sinful flesh, and that his sin was but a momentary spot on the purity of his saintly character. At the same time, in judging of David's sin, we must not forget that he lived under a dispensation far more obscure

than that of the Gospel. We enjoy a clearer light ; but its demands upon us are proportionately greater. Under the Christian dispensation, "Whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart ;" and "Whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment," having made one step towards the crime of murder. Such being the case, we have reason to tremble in the presence of the holy prophet when he pleads for judgment ; and even when our zeal for justice leads us to condemn another, we may only have to listen to the voice of the Eternal Truth to hear the words pronounced in our internal ear—"Thou art the man."

But the spiritual sense reveals the origin both of the evil prohibited by the law, and of the intention condemned by the Gospel.

Marriage is at once an effect and a type of the heavenly marriage of goodness and truth, or of love and faith. In this marriage the man represents truth and the wife good. To violate the good which any truth of religion teaches is the spiritual evil which David's first sin represented. But as his first sin led to the second, so does the violation of good lead to the falsification and destruction of its truth. When we have done violence to any good of religion, its truth rises up in our thoughts, and haunts us with visions of a coming judgment. It is Uriah, whom we have spoiled of his best treasure—the poor man, whose ewe lamb we have torn from his bosom, and dressed to satisfy our wandering lusts and depraved appetites. Our first endeavour is to draw the truth over to the evil side ; but it consents not, and lies like sin at our door, filling us with alarm and apprehension. But when the truth will not consent, it must be made to yield ; and so it is perverted and falsified, and thus practically destroyed. This is the history of every spiritual-moral declension. First the will corrupts the good, and then the understanding falsifies and destroys the truth. The falsification and consequent practical destruction of the truth is especially represented by the second criminal act of David. For Nathan lays particular stress on the fact, not simply that David had slain Uriah, but that he had slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon. Moab and Ammon were the two sons of Lot by his daughters, and represented, as the Moabites and Ammonites did after them, the profaning of goodness and truth. We are spiritually guilty of David's crime in killing Uriah, when we put such a false construction upon any truth as to destroy its real meaning and practical utility, and so remove it as an obstacle to selfish or sensual indulgence.

When the reproving voice of truth is hushed into silence, the troubled mind finds peace ; but it is the peace which is no peace—the stillness of corruption, the calm of spiritual deadness. Happy is it if the conscience, though silenced, is not seared. It may yet be awakened

by the voice of the Eternal Truth, speaking to it through its sense of right. So it was with David. When the grave had closed over Uriah, and Bathsheba was in the king's palace, David sat upon the throne of judgment, with a conscience stifled, if not at rest. But when the Lord's prophet turned upon the guilty judge the sword of justice, which he had raised over one less guilty than himself, it entered into his soul, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and proving a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Smitten with a sense of sin, he sat, a conscience-stricken and a humbled man, uttering before the man of God, and in the presence of his assembled court, the unreserved confession, "I have sinned against the Lord."

David's ready confession received as ready a forgiveness: "Nathan said unto David, The Lord also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die."

It may seem at variance with strict justice that so serious a sin should have met with so ready a forgiveness. But it is in strict accordance with the Scripture law upon the subject. In both Testaments pardon is promised on repentance. If David's repentance was sincere, his sin could not consistently remain unpardoned. At the same time we are to reflect that David's punishment, repentance, and forgiveness were natural and temporal, while those of the Christian are spiritual and eternal. Christian forgiveness can only, therefore, be secured by Christian repentance.

But while repentance never fails to receive forgiveness, sin, once committed, entails certain consequences on him who commits it. Although David's life was spared, he did not escape unscathed. Having slain Uriah with the sword, the sword was never to depart from his house; having divided the house of another, his own house was to be divided; having taken his neighbour's wife, his own wives were to be given to his neighbour; having sinned secretly, he was to be punished in kind openly; and having given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme, the child that was born to him was to die.

The law of retaliation, which forms the ground of this judgment, had its origin in the law of equity—"Do to others as ye would that others should do to you." In heaven, and among the heavenly minded, this law is only known as the rule for measuring out good to one another; but when it descends into the lower world, and among natural men in whom heavenly order is inverted, it becomes the rule for measuring out evil, "An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth." Still it is the same Divine law, being the law of providence in the one case, and the law of permission in the other. When God permits the employment of the law of retaliation, it is to teach us that every evil has within itself its own punishment, and that every evil act ultimately returns on the head of him who commits it. In the present instance

we are instructed that, even when sins have been confessed and forgiven, the evil condition of mind in which they have originated cannot be corrected, and the mind restored to a right state, without conflict with the very evils from which our sins have proceeded. We are not to suppose that repentance and forgiveness wipe our sins at once and for ever away. Repentance turns our faces Zionwards ; but in our journey to the holy city we have to encounter the very evils that have led us away from its gates ; and unless we overcome them, we can never gain that place of security and peace. The life of the spiritual man is one of conflict ; the sword never departs from his house ; the foes against whom he has to contend are those of his own household—the evils of his own heart ; the sin he has committed in secret is to return upon him openly, and the fruit of sin itself is to die.

We may humbly trust that the purer principles of Christianity and the grace of its Divine Author will preserve us from sinning after the similitude of David's transgression. Yet the contemplation of his transgression is profitable. We inherit the same nature, and are of like passions, and are exposed to the same temptations, as the Israelitish king. Do we not, then, need to regard his sin as a warning ? But we need to be warned against more than the deeds themselves which he committed. Impurity of thought and intention is the unclean sin in its beginning, and to cherish is to commit. Anger and revenge are more than the seeds of murder : they are the branches of the evil tree that bears the deadly fruit. These we have to learn, from David's double crime, to shun. But we may learn from it to look still deeper into our hearts and minds. We may see both evils in their first origin in the violation of any spiritual principle of good whatever, and in perverting the truth that teaches, guards, and defends it. Knowing that every part of the Holy Word is divinely inspired, and is given for correction, for reproof, for instruction in righteousness, let us remember the end for which it is given—that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.

CHAPTER XVI.

AMNON AND TAMAR.

2 Samuel xiii.

THE Sacred Scriptures have some characteristics which can hardly fail to impress any candid mind with the conviction that they are the Word of God and not the word of man. They have evidently been written for the purpose of teaching great truths and inculcating high

principles, with a total absence of even the appearance of being trimmed to meet the views of human expediency. In recording the lives of those who profess to be the servants or the friends of God, deeds that tarnish the character, and actions that shed lustre upon it, are recorded with the same openness and fidelity; and those who occupy the highest stations or exercise the holiest functions, are treated with the same impartial judgment that is meted out to the meanest and obscurest in the land. In such cases human expediency would have suggested either a total suppression or great modification of the facts, on the ground that the misdeeds of religious men bring discredit on the cause with which they are connected. God has a tender regard for the honour of His Church and kingdom; but this does not prevent Him from exposing the misdeeds, or bringing to light the secret sins, of those who belong to them. David, for instance, is blamed, not only for having committed a grievous sin, but for having given occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme; but this does not prevent a public exposure of his secret crime. It has been remarked how faithfully the Evangelists chronicle events, even when their own failings and faults are to be recorded. Human policy inclines men to act differently. God blames, but does not conceal, the sins of His people. The Church may not be disinclined to censure the evils of her children, but she is disposed to hide them from the eyes of the world. Concealment sometimes even puts on the semblance of charity. Charity does not indeed delight in exposing the sins of others; but neither does she desire to conceal them merely to prevent a public scandal.

Another characteristic of the Scriptures which supports their claim to be the Word of God is this. They show no false delicacy. They speak of impure actions in a becoming manner; but they do not smooth them over so as to take away their true repulsiveness. The fact that the Scriptures mention them at all is considered by some as an offence against modesty. To treat impure subjects, or even to speak of them, in such a manner as to pander to a prurient feeling, is in itself impure; but when the truth is told for the sake of good as an end, the end justifies the means, and makes that pure which in itself is impure. "To the pure all things are pure."

The case of Amnon and Tamar stands alone in the page of Divine Revelation. The case may be briefly stated, and we shall do this as far as possible in the words of Scripture. "Absalom the son of David had a fair sister, whose name was Tamar; and Amnon the son of David loved her." It was against the law of Moses for a man to marry his sister, the daughter of his father or the daughter of his mother (Lev. xviii. 9). Amnon's was therefore an unlawful passion; and the sequel shows it was as impure as it was criminal. But

"Amnon was so vexed, that he fell sick for his sister Tamar; for she was a virgin; and Amnon thought it hard for him to do any thing to her." There was as yet something of honour in Amnon's passion. But he yielded to evil counsel. His cousin Jonadab, a very subtil man, saw his leanness, and having extracted from him his secret, gave him the advice which he acted upon. Amnon lay down on his bed and made himself sick, and when the king came to see him, he prayed that his sister Tamar might come, and make him a couple of cakes in his sight, that he might eat them at her hand. When he had allured the unsuspecting maiden into his chamber, where she brought the cakes for him to eat, "he took hold of her, and said unto her, Come lie with me, my sister." She remonstrated and eloquently pleaded against the threatened violation of her virgin purity. "Howbeit he would not hearken unto her voice: but, being stronger than she, forced her, and lay with her." "As the nightingale in Hesiod sung in vain to the ravenous hawk, so Tamar said all her words to a deaf man, who was wholly under the power of his furious lust, and was regardless of God and man."

But this was not the consummation of his crime, though the sequel was its not unnatural consequence. "Then Amnon hated her exceedingly; so that the hatred wherewith he hated her was greater than the love wherewith he had loved her. And Amnon said unto her, Arise, be gone." Tamar again remonstrated against this second cruelty as being greater than the first, but he would not hearken to her. Thrust out by his servants, "Tamar put ashes on her head, and rent her garment of divers colours that was on her, and laid her hand on her head, and went on crying." But Absalom her brother comforted her. "So Tamar remained desolate in her brother Absalom's house."

The recurrence of a case like that of Amnon and Tamar is not much to be feared, and therefore need not be greatly guarded against. But the passion in which it originated is common to all men, and the form it took in Amnon was not an unnatural but only an unrestrained development; and it is no doubt recorded in Scripture to show us, by an extreme case, what evil the desire, when ungoverned and unhallowed, may produce. The sinful indulgence of the sexual passion, which unhappily is not uncommon, is fraught with such ruinous consequences, especially to that half of the human family on whose unstained purity the moral beauty of social and domestic life so greatly depends, that a strong sense of duty overcomes any scruples of conventional delicacy there may be against treating of the subject. We cannot perhaps do better, in drawing attention to Amnon's sin, than to show the difference there is, in some essential respects, between love and passion.

The first and most essential difference between them is, that love is a human affection and passion is an animal desire. Both of them

exist in man, but one belongs to his human nature, the other to his animal nature. Man is human by virtue of what he enjoys above what animals possess. In common with the inferior creatures he inherits all the natural desires and appetites, and among them those which draw the sexes to each other. But besides the animal nature man has a rational soul; and it is this which makes him human. Strictly speaking, the rational soul, as inherited by birth, is rather the faculty of becoming human than humanity itself. Humanity, as we have had occasion to remark, consists of goodness and truth, or love and wisdom, which are the principles of human life, and which make man truly human, because truly rational. Now passion is an affection of the animal nature, and love is an affection of the rational soul. Passion is therefore a natural affection, and desires only natural gratification; while love is a rational affection, and desires rational satisfactions and enjoyments. Nay, love, in its best state, is spiritual and celestial, and aspires after a spiritual and eternal union.

Notwithstanding the possession of a rational soul, man may remain natural and sensual. He may live so much in his animal nature, that his rational faculty may remain comparatively undeveloped. He may therefore be more an animal than a man. The main difference between a sensual man and an animal is, that the animal follows its desires, uninfluenced by any higher end, and undirected by any higher law, than those which the Creator has inscribed upon its nature. Man may combine other motives, such as worldly advantage, rank, dignity; and may be outwardly ruled by the laws of his country and of social life, or by the love of reputation. There is, on the other hand, this difference between a sensual man and an animal. The animal never employs force or cunningly devised schemes to gratify its sexual desire, but man employs both, so that his human faculties, when perverted, make him more dangerous and viler than a beast.

The present historical circumstance affords an instance of a passion so strong as to consume the body, and yet be merely natural, a proof that the ardency of a passion is no test of its purity. The character of an affection is determined by the state and condition of the man. With the sensual man love is sensual even as it is in the mind; with the spiritual man love is spiritual even as it is in the body. It is the merit and advantage of religion, that it enters into the inmost of the mind, and creates a motive higher than the world and more enduring than time; and that it permeates and purifies and sanctifies all the affections, passions, and appetites of man's nature.

The second difference between love and passion is, that love is orderly, and passion is disorderly. Order is prescribed by laws. We do not here refer so much to the laws of man as to the laws of God. From a merely natural point of view laws seem to be simply limitations

and restraints ; and some natural men have held that the only difference between marriage and free love is, that one is artificial and the other is natural. If man, like the animal, had the law inscribed on his nature, he would need no outward rules. As this is not the case, he requires to be made acquainted with what is necessary for his guidance in the order and conduct of life. To a rational man law is not so much a restraint as a direction. The law does not restrain him, he restrains himself by the law, and walks in it as the divinely appointed means of order, which leads to happiness. It is necessary for our welfare and happiness that our natural appetites and passions should be restrained and kept in order. The greatest misfortune that could overtake us would be to abolish all law, and leave our natural man to do as wished. And yet there is a time and state when law can be dispensed with ; and that is when the law has done its work by reducing all unruly things to subjection and bringing all right things into order ; when love takes the place of law ; for love is the fulfilling of the law (Rom. xiii. 10). Amnon's was a disorderly love. There are instances indeed in the early parts of Scripture of marriage between what were afterwards made prohibited degrees. Abraham and Sarah were brother and sister, being, like Amnon and Tamar, children of the same father, but not of the same mother. But arrangements that are suitable to a simpler state of society and purer state of life, are not always safe and proper in what is called a more advanced state of civilization, in which life is more artificial.

A third difference between love and passion is, that love is a principle, passion is an impulse. Passion has a view to its own gratification, without having any regard for the honour, welfare, or happiness of the object to whom it is directed. Love has respect to them all. No more clear and unmistakable characteristic of love, as distinguished from passion, is its delicate sense of propriety, its scrupulous regard for the honour and purity of its object. Love does not extinguish passion, but it quells its unruly motions, and brings it into compliance with the dictates of honour, and the sentiments of admiration and esteem. So far from desiring or meditating anything that could, in the smallest degree, injure the object loved, it becomes her guardian and protector. No desire is so debasing as mere passion ; no affection is so ennobling as true love.

Lastly, love, as distinguished from passion, is constant. Amnon, when his passion was gratified, hated Tamar, so that the hatred wherewith he hated her was greater than the love wherewith he loved her. Sensual love may not in all cases change its character so suddenly and completely as his, but its tendency is to pass off into indifference or loathing. Inherently it is not the love of another but the love of self. And that hatred which Amnon exhibited lies within

such a passion from the beginning. The love of self is the hatred of others. And that very passion which seems like love is hate, because it seeks its own in the ruin of another. And this its hidden nature comes, in some instances, to be its outward and obvious character. But whether it takes this outward visible form or not, unscrupulous passion is in its essence hatred. Love is constant, because it is founded, not on the love of self, but on the love of another. It rests on esteem and on inmost confiding friendship. It is the love of character more than of person, therefore of inward more than of outward beauty. Love thus lies within passion as a diamond in its matrix; and the union which it desires is essentially a union of soul with soul and of mind with mind, without which outward union and passionate gratification are mean and inhuman. Love, as distinguished from passion, is therefore not only constant, but increases in all the qualities that produce constancy. Union formed by love becomes more perfect, and the more perfect the more enduring. Indeed the union of two souls, formed by true conjugal love, survives the death of the material body, and cohabitation increases in constancy, happiness, and delight through eternity.

We may remark, in conclusion, that the principles of the Christian religion, as restored and exalted in the Writings of the New Church, afford just ground of confidence that those who adopt them in heart and life will be preserved from every form of Amnon's sin, as well as from sin in every other form. The light that now shines forth from the sacred page of Divine Revelation, exhibits so clearly the hidden springs of human action and the root and radicles of sin, and shows us how certainly we may detect the evil in ourselves, that the teaching of the New Church affords a powerful protection against the specious grounds on which deviation from the strict line of religious virtue is often presented and urged upon us both from within and from without. On the particular subject of the relation of the sexes, the teaching of the New Church is highly instructive and eminently practical, and so exalts our ideas of the purity and sanctity of conjugal love, that every true member of the Church must regard chastity as the tenderest part of the moral sense, and that he who offends against it touches the very apple of the eye.

The sin of Amnon has some relation, as it has some family likeness, to the sin of David, which it immediately follows in the series of the history, if we except David's terrible treatment of the conquered Ammonites. The Divine record seems as if intended by its Author to reveal the effects, in their worst forms, of ungoverned and unsanctified passion. But these evils spring from spiritual causes, which they therefore represent. On this subject it may be sufficient to say that "in the Word, in the internal sense, adulteries signify

adulterations of good, and whoredoms, falsifications of truth; but the filthy conjunctions which, in Leviticus (xviii. 6-24), are called the prohibited degrees, signify various kinds of profanation." As the state of the Church at the time of its end, when the Lord was in the world, is here represented, these are the evils which had come to prevail in it, and which He by temptation-conflicts overcame and removed. The pure truth and good of the Word, and, as a consequence, the faith and love of the Church, had become so corrupted that hardly anything of pure and undefiled religion remained. These the Lord came to restore. But, in order to remove the corruption, He had to contend against it still more in its inward invisible essence than in its outward visible form. He reproved the corruptions of the Jews, and through them of the world, and taught that lust is adultery and hatred murder; but He also had to endure the temptations of the wilderness, the agony of the garden, and the shame of the cross, because men had ceased to resist the devil, or to be agonized by sin, or to crucify the lusts of the flesh.

There is another aspect in which this painful case is to be regarded.

Once erect and beautiful as the palm-tree, whose name she bears, but now bowed down under the insupportable weight of her unspeakable wrongs, the many-coloured garment of her maidenhood rent, and sitting desolate in sackcloth, Tamar is the very image of the affection for goodness and truth shamefully polluted and vilely cast away by the unhallowed lust of falsehood and evil.

King's daughters represented the affections of goodness and truth, and the garment of divers colours which they wore was the emblem of truth as the vesture of goodness in its virgin purity. Truth is like light, which is so often used in Scripture as its emblem, as when God is said to clothe Himself with light as with a garment. Like light, truth consists of divers colours, and can be divided into them. Pure truth exists only in the Divine mind; the finite mind sees only the appearances of truth, and these are the colours into which the pure truth of God is refracted when it enters the minds of angels and men. Tamar's garment of divers colours is the truth of God as variously received and perceived by the members of the Church. The rending of her garment was thus a representative sign, that when the good of the Church is violated, its truth is rent in pieces, as the Lord's garment was at the time of the crucifixion. If, when good is destroyed or profaned, the truth were to remain, it would deceive, because it would be an appearance behind which there was no reality, a garment that would cover iniquity and give it the appearance of righteousness, or that would, as in the present case, conceal the violence which the good of the Church has suffered at the hand of sinful man. Tamar, when she rent her garment, put ashes, and laid her hand, upon her head,

which indicated that when good is profaned, not only is truth divided and destroyed, but all true intelligence is lost; and she went on weeping, as a sign of mourning in bitterness of spirit over the desolate state of the Church.

According to the law of Moses Amnon's life was forfeited (Lev. xviii. 9, 29). David was very wroth, yet Amnon escaped unpunished. But Absalom, though he spake unto his brother Amnon neither good nor bad, determined to avenge his sister's wrongs; and the stroke came though it was long delayed. "It came to pass after two full years, that Absalom had sheepshearers in Baal-hazor, which is beside Ephraim: and Absalom invited all the king's sons." Wealth in those days consisted chiefly in flocks and herds; and sheepshearing was an honourable occupation, not beneath the dignity of princes. Sheep-shearing signifies the performance of use, and the fleece of the sheep the good of charity. But the place where this sheepshearing took place indicates the character of the use to which it was to be applied. Ephraim represented the intellectual principle of the Church, and the city of Ephraim, which is here meant, and which was in the tribe of Judah, not far from Jerusalem, signified the doctrine of the Church, while Baal-hazor, which means a fenced place, a castle, signifies reasoning by which her doctrine is confirmed. Absalom's position, which he assumed and no doubt justified to himself, was near and partly within the doctrine of the Church upon the subject, for the law awarded death to Amnon's crime, but it was against the law for him, of his own will, to inflict the punishment. Amnon's death was merited, but the act that deprived him of his life was lawless. But lawlessness characterized Absalom's subsequent conduct, and finally proved his ruin. Yet there is in this act a permissive and overruling Providence. Where legal justice sleeps, it is in certain conditions well that natural justice should rise up and redress a flagrant wrong. Natural justice is, however, a dangerous power, and is inconsistent with orderly and stable government. It rests on private feelings and interests, and is wanting in the dispassionate and impartial judgment that belongs to a tribunal which is based on general principles and regards the public good. But Amnon has fallen under a stroke that he had not unjustly drawn down upon himself. He who had dishonoured a sister has been slain by a brother. And these unnatural deeds may be regarded as counterparts of each other, and as teaching the solemn lesson that one evil produces another of a kindred nature, turning even domestic love into hatred and virtue into vice, and bringing upon the soul certain destruction.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE WIDOW OF TEKOAH'S PARABLE AND ABSALOM'S RETURN.

2 *Samuel* xiv.

ABSALOM, when he had slain Amnon, fled, and went to Talmai king of Geshur, who was his grandfather ; he being the son of Maacah, the daughter of Talmai, one of David's wives (iii. 3). Absalom was like an offending child who seeks refuge from a father's severity in a mother's tenderness. In this Syrian kingdom he remained three years. Being himself a Syrian by maternal descent, he no doubt, during the period of his abode in Geshur, strengthened this hereditary side of his character, which he so conspicuously displayed after his return to Judea. For Syria, while it represented the knowledge of spiritual things, represented also that knowledge perverted ; as the sons of the East, which the Syrians are sometimes called, were wise men, but were also among those of whom it is said, "Thy wisdom and thy knowledge, it hath perverted thee" (Isa. xlvii. 10).

David's love of Absalom gradually overcame his displeasure. "The soul of king David longed to go forth unto Absalom : for he was comforted concerning Amnon, seeing he was dead." When Joab perceived that the king's heart was towards Absalom, he employed his ingenuity to obtain the king's consent to Absalom's return without directly proposing it. He "sent to Tekoah, and fetched thence a wise woman, and said unto her, I pray thee, feign thyself to be a mourner, and put on now mourning apparel, and anoint not thyself with oil, but be as a woman that had a long time mourned for the dead : and come to the king, and speak on this manner unto him. So Joab put the words in her mouth."

The parable which Joab put into the mouth of the woman of Tekoah, though not equal either in its subject or its object to the parable of Nathan the prophet, was well adapted to the purpose it was intended to serve. Attired as a widow who had long mourned for the dead, she came to implore the help of the king. "Thy handmaid had two sons, and they two strove together in the field, and there was none to part them, but the one smote the other, and slew him. And, behold, the whole family is risen against thine handmaid, and they said, Deliver him that smote his brother, that we may kill him, for the life of his brother whom he slew ; and we will destroy the heir also : and so they shall quench my coal which is left, and shall not leave to my husband neither name nor remainder upon the earth." The king desired her

to return to her house, and he would give charge concerning her. This was not sufficient for the suppliant's purpose. She led the king on, till he made the solemn declaration, "As the Lord liveth, there shall not one hair of thy son fall to the earth." Then she disclosed her purpose, and applied her parable, not indeed with the overpowering directness and authority of the prophet, as the man and messenger of God, but with a freedom and boldness that bespoke the consciousness of being upheld by a power greater than her own. "Wherefore then," she demands, "hast thou thought such a thing against the people of God? For the king doth speak this thing as one which is faulty, in that the king doth not fetch home again his banished." After alluding to the case of the manslayer, for whom God had appointed a city of refuge, and devised means that his banished be not expelled from him, she concludes with saying, "The word of my lord the king shall now be comfortable: for as an angel of God, so is my lord the king to discern good and bad: therefore the Lord thy God will be with thee."

But the king had discerned more than the wise woman suspected. He saw not merely what was the purpose of the parable, but who was its real author. "The king answered and said unto the woman, Hide not from me, I pray thee, the thing that I shall ask thee. Is not the hand of Joab with thee in all this?" In confessing the truth, the woman makes it the means of paying an Oriental compliment to the king, as being "wise, according to the wisdom of an angel of God, to know all things that are in the earth."

Although this scheme for obtaining the king's consent to the return of Absalom was of human contrivance, the circumstances, in virtue of their forming part of an inspired record, have a Divine and spiritual meaning.

In Joab we see here, as in the case of Uriah, the pliant instrument of the king's will, as the reasoning faculty he represents can be of the human will. Joab perceived that the heart of the king was toward Absalom. But the wise woman of Tekoah was Joab's instrument. She did not devise, but her woman's wit was relied on for the effective execution of a plan which might require much more than clever acting. As women's perceptions are keener than their reasonings are powerful, they have more resources for sudden emergency than men have; and the woman of Tekoah showed herself to be, in this respect, equal to the occasion. She is not, however, alone in her reputation for wisdom. A little further on in this history, we shall meet with another wise woman whose quick perception and decision of character were the means of saving a city from destruction at the hand of Joab himself.

There is not much in the Word to guide us as to any connection that existed between the wise woman and Tekoah. This city is mentioned twice in the prophets. Amos was a herdsman of Tekoah

when he was called to the prophetic office (i. 1); and Jeremiah speaks of it. "O ye children of Benjamin, gather yourselves to flee out of the midst of Jerusalem, and blow the trumpet in Tekoah, and set up a sign of fire in Beth-haccerem: for evil appeareth out of the north, and great destruction" (vi. 1). "The subject here treated of is the devastation of the Church as to truth and good, because it is against Zion and Jerusalem, for Zion signifies the good of the Church and Jerusalem its truth; and as the sons of Benjamin signify the conjunction of goodness and truth, they are commanded to assemble themselves out of the midst of Jerusalem, to blow the trumpet in Tekoah, and kindle a fire in Beth-haccerem (or the house of the vineyard). To blow the trumpet signifies combat, by virtue of truths derived from good, against that Church, the house of the vineyard signifying that Church itself, and to kindle a fire upon it signifies the destruction of the same by evil loves. The north, from which the evil appears, signifies the falsity of evil, and the great destruction the dissipation of goodness and truth." Tekoah and Beth-haccerem were near each other, and not far from Jerusalem; and it is evident, from the trumpet blown in the one and a sign of fire set up in the other, that they have reference to the two principles of truth and goodness in the Church; for truth is the trumpet that sounds the alarm, and good is the sign of fire, and is that which the fire of evil love destroys. When Amos was among the herdsmen of Tekoah he was called by the Lord to raise a warning voice to backsliding Israel; and he speaks of the Lord's word through him by this same figure: "Shall a trumpet be blown in the city, and the people not be afraid?" (ii. 6.) Tekoah, therefore, as mentioned by the prophets, is that truth which comes with the voice of warning and expostulation. The voice, in the case we are now considering, is that of a woman, although the words she utters are those of a man. The parable, which was designed to win the king's consent, must, it is true, be put into a woman's mouth; but, for a higher reason, it was meet that the expostulation and appeal should be uttered by a woman's voice; for the king himself desired what he was to be asked to grant; and one who was the type of affection was the suitable medium of appealing to the heart. Yet the king, when his affection had been secured, saw through the artifice, he saw that the voice was indeed the widow's voice, but that the words were the words of Joab. As in the case of Jacob, when clothed in Esau's garments, good was without and truth was within. It was under the semblance of good that truth attained its object.

The parable itself was simple; and though the main incident was true, the circumstances connected with it were not. It was true that one brother slew the other, but it was not true that they strove together in the field, and that there was none to part them. This part

of the parable was not based upon the law of Moses, for no case of this kind occurs in the civil code. The law treats of accidental and of wilful homicide. For him who killed his neighbour ignorantly, whom he hated not in time past, a city of refuge was provided ; but for him who hated his neighbour, and lay in wait for him, and rose up against him, and smote him mortally that he died, there was no escape (Deut. xix.). It is evident that in the time of David the law of Moses was not, at least in all cases, strictly enforced. And this may be regarded as indicating the state of the Church at the time our Lord was in the world, when the law was in a great measure set aside ; and when, in consequence, the Lord's mercy was exercised, not against the law, but without it. For at the end of the Church, the people are in a great measure in the state of the servant that knew not his lord's will, and committed things worthy of stripes, and who was therefore beaten with few (Luke xii. 48). The Lord is mercy itself. He is the lord in the parable who forgave his servant ten thousand talents because he asked him. But answers to prayer and forgiveness of sins are not always represented in Scripture as so directly or easily obtained as in the parable of the indebted servant. In the parable of the unjust judge we are taught the necessity of persistent prayer, and encouraged confidently to hope that, however long delayed, an answer of peace will come at last. The Divine mercy, though in itself spontaneous and unbounded, is hindered and limited in its exercise by the unfitness of sinners to receive and use it. And he who obtains mercy in the forgiveness of his sins, may forfeit that mercy by being himself unmerciful, as did the forgiven servant when he refused to forgive a fellow-servant, who owed him an hundred pence (Matt. xviii. 23-35). So we find Absalom, after he had obtained his father's forgiveness, rebelling against him. Here, however, we have only to consider the forgiveness. For this there was a desire on both sides. Both the king and Absalom desired reconciliation. But means were required to bring it about. And this is always the case whether it is indicated or not. However simple and direct the action of the mind may seem, there are many different powers called into activity in even the simplest mental operation ; just as in the body every movement calls innumerable parts into action. In all cases of reconciliation and conjunction there must be reconciling and conjoining mediums. And the operation may seem to begin with them. The rational faculty, for instance, is so constituted that it has the power of looking upward and downward, upward to heaven and downward to the world, upward to what is spiritual and downward to what is natural ; or, what is the same, the rational is able to look inward and outward, inward to the inner man and outward to the outer man, and to mediate between them, so as to reconcile and unite them.

Joab's mediation through the widow was successful. "The king said unto Joab, Behold now, I have done this thing : go therefore, bring the young man Absalom again." Joab fell to the ground on his face, and bowed himself, and thanked the king, representing the submission of the rational to the spiritual ; and then he arose and went to Geshur, and brought Absalom to Jerusalem, representing the influx of the spiritual through the rational into the natural, by which the natural is elevated into a spiritual state. But reconciliation and conjunction were not yet complete. "The king said, Let him turn to his own house, and let him not see my face." The face represents the interior of the mind, as the back represents its exterior. Hence so much is said of the Lord's face, as expressive of the inmost and hidden nature of God, which no man can see and live, and which yet may be seen as brought forth to view in the Divine Humanity, which veils the glory of the Essential Divinity ; and hence Moses, who desired to see the Divine Glory, was not permitted to see the Lord's face, but only His back parts. In this state of incomplete reconciliation Absalom remained two full years, that number which is so often mentioned when a state representative of conjunction, or one ready for conjunction, is treated of. "Therefore Absalom sent for Joab, to have sent him to the king." But Joab, though sent for three times, refused to come ; and was only induced to comply by Absalom's servants setting Joab's field of barley on fire. A full state of truth does not of itself bring the rational over to the natural ; but when the fire of natural love, as zeal, invades the good of the rational mind, which is from a natural origin, and is in connection with natural good, as Joab's field was near Absalom's field, or place, then is the effect produced. "Joab came to the king, and told him : and when he had called for Absalom, he came to the king, and bowed himself on his face to the ground before the king : and the king kissed Absalom." Thus the son humbled himself before his father, and his father gave him the kiss of love, the symbol of reconciliation and conjunction.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE REBELLION OF ABSALOM.

2 Samuel xv. 1-9.

WHEN, after David had procured the death of Uriah, and taken Bathsheba to be his wife, the prophet was sent by the Lord to reprove the king and pronounce judgment against him, one of the consequences of his sin was declared to be, that the Lord would raise up

evil against him out of his own house. This was amply verified in the rebellion of Absalom. That prince, as we have seen, had slain his brother Amnon, and fled to Geshur, where he remained three years. On being, by the indulgence of his father, permitted to return to Jerusalem, and afterwards admitted into his favour, he, by his condescension and apparent and professed desire to care for their concerns and judge in their disputes, stole the hearts of the people. This was but a means to effect his end, which was to seize the throne of his father. And having on a false pretence obtained leave to go to Hebron, he sent spies through all Israel, who declared him king. War was now made by this ambitious and unnatural son against his father ; and a battle was fought between the army of David and that of Absalom in the wood of Ephraim. The arms of the king prevailed : and Absalom himself, carried by his mule under the thick boughs of a great oak, was caught by his head, his hair getting entangled in its branches ; and, the mule passing from under him, he was left suspended between heaven and earth, where he was slain by Joab thrusting three arrows through his heart.

This portion of sacred history, one of the most painful that the Word contains, and one of the most dreadful that history records, has its moral, and should be read with a feeling of deep humiliation. It exhibits one of the worst phases of our degenerate nature, and holds up a solemn warning both to parents and children, to guard against the neglect or violation of those laws Divinely delivered and enjoined for the prevention of evils destructive of domestic as well as of public order, peace, and happiness.

But this historical relation contains still deeper lessons in virtue of its spiritual or internal meaning, a meaning which it contains in common with every part of the Divine Word, as the result of its inspiration. Were we to consider it in that inmost sense, in which the Word relates to the Lord as the Word Incarnate, we should find that the present circumstance points to some one of the Lord's deepest temptations. David was a type of the Lord in human nature, while engaged in the work of redemption, a work which He effected by admitting temptations from the whole powers of darkness, and combating against them from His own inherent power. And those temptations were admitted through the hereditary evils of his maternal humanity, which the tempting powers endeavoured to excite into hostility or rebellion against the will of the Father, or of the Divinity that dwelt within Him. In the Lord indeed there could be no actual evil, which alone is sin, although there was a will which He inherited from His human mother contrary to the will which He inherited from His Divine Father ; but that will He ever held in submission to the Divine will, as expressed in His words, " Not My will, but Thine be done." The rebellion of Absalom

represented, therefore, in respect to the Lord, only a temptation to evil, but not evil itself, since He never sinned either by consent or act. In human beings, however, evil does not always end with the temptation to commit it. Every one is more or less guilty of actual evil, and is thereby a sinner. Those, indeed, who have begun to follow the Lord in the regenerate life, must be understood to successfully resist temptation, though not every temptation, nor everything in any one, since no one who yields in all can be a true follower of Him who never yielded in any. When any one overcomes a temptation, the evil which gave it admission is weakened or removed, and order and peace are more or less completely restored. In these temptations, a man's foes are often, in a peculiar sense, they of his own house—his own cherished evil desires and false thoughts being the enemies that rise up against him, and the nearer these are to the centre of his life, the deeper the temptation, the severer the trial.

The rebellion of Absalom is a fit symbol of some of those temptations and trials; and the defeat and death of that unnatural son a fit emblem of their removal.

While this application of the subject presents itself when viewed from the side of the victor, it admits of another application when regarded from that of the vanquished: and it is on this side that we propose to contemplate the circumstance of Absalom's death.

We may consider him as, in the most obvious sense, representing one who is inspired with the love of dominion. The love of dominion, for its own sake, is the love of self in one of its deepest and most dangerous forms. When that lust obtains complete ascendancy in the heart, it allows nothing to stand between it and its object. It quenches the warmest affections, and breaks asunder the strongest ties. It is the Lucifer that seeks to exalt its throne above the stars of heaven, and to aspire to unlimited authority.

But there is another and greater evil than ambition, however towering, which the rebellion of Absalom represented. To see what this evil is, we must inquire more particularly into his representative character than it has been hitherto thought necessary to do. We have to consider his parentage. He was the son of David by Maachah, daughter of Talmai king of Geshur.

In the highest sense kings represented the Lord, their wives represented the Church, and their sons and daughters those who are born of the Lord as a father and of the Church as a mother. As there is but one Lord, there can be but one Church, as the Lord's bride and wife. Yet David and Solomon, who were eminent types of the Lord, had many wives and concubines. In what respect did these represent the Church? If the Church on earth were one and undivided, the union of the Lord and His Church could only be represented by a

marriage of one husband with one wife. This is true of the purely celestial Church, to which the Lord is related as a Husband in His priestly character; and to represent the absolute unity of this Church, a priest was not allowed to have more than one wife, and that wife must have been married a virgin. In the spiritual Church, even in its celestial state—for there is a celestial of the spiritual, as there is a spiritual of the celestial—the case is different. The spiritual Church, like the celestial, is one before the Lord, but before men it is many and even diverse. The Church universal consists of numerous general and particular churches, both within and beyond the pale of the visible Church, where the Word is known and the Lord is acknowledged; as in our day, in Christendom and in Heathendom. The reason of this difference of the Church, as seen by the Lord and by men, is this. The Lord looks at the Church in respect to its goodness and love, and men look at the Church in respect to its truth and faith; or, as the Lord Himself expresses it, man looketh on the outward appearance (literally, on the eyes), but the Lord looketh upon the heart. The celestial Church is one in itself, and the spiritual Church is one in the Lord's sight, because good, which is the celestial principle, is one, but truth, which is the spiritual principle, is manifold. This difference is expressed even with regard to the Lord Himself, in the two Divine names by which He is chiefly designated. Jehovah, which is His Divine celestial name, is singular, but Elohim, which is His Divine spiritual name, is plural. Good, which is the celestial principle, is one, but truth, which is the spiritual principle, is manifold. And in this we see one of the wonders of Divine mercy. Good is the saving grace, and good is one; but the one good can be given under various forms of truth, or under various modes of faith; and thus can the Lord save those of every religion, in which a God is acknowledged, and evil is condemned as sin against Him, and good is required to be loved for His sake. On this interesting subject the Writings shed a clear light. Take an example. The author is treating of the family of Nahor, the brother of Abram, by his wife Milcah and his concubine Rumah; where Nahor and Milcah signify the good and truth among a certain class of Gentiles. He says, "That the Gentiles are in possession of truths may appear from many considerations. For it is well known that the Gentiles of old were in wisdom and intelligence, in that they acknowledged one God, and wrote concerning Him with much sanctity. They acknowledged also the immortality of the soul, and a life after death, and likewise the happy state of the good and the unhappy state of the wicked. Their laws, moreover, were grounded in the commandments of the Decalogue—that God is to be worshipped, that parents are to be honoured, that murder, theft, and adultery are crimes which ought not to be committed, and that it is sinful to covet

what belongs to others. Nor were they content to practise these things in externals only, but insisted on their internal observance. The case is the same at this day. The well-disposed Gentiles in all parts of the earth discourse on these subjects better than Christians, nor do they discourse only, but live accordingly. These and various truths are in possession of the Gentiles, and join themselves with the good which they have from the Lord. In consequence of this conjunction, they are in a state of receiving still more truths, because one truth acknowledges another, and they easily enter into consociation, there being connections and relationships of truths. Hence it is that they who have been principled in good in the world easily receive the truths of faith in the other life. Things false with such persons do not join themselves with good ; they only apply themselves, but so as to be easily separable from them. Falsities which are joined remain ; but those which are only applied are separated, and they are separated when the truths of faith are learned and imbibed ; for every truth of faith removes and separates what is false, insomuch that at length what is false shuns and hates what is true."

Now Absalom's mother belonged to one of those Gentile nations which were in possession of truths. The daughter of the king of Geshur, she was a Syrian. In Syria the ancient Church and afterwards the Hebrew Church had their principal home. Abram, who was a Syrian, was, as a remnant of this second ancient Church, called out of his country and from his father's house, to be the father of the representative Church, named after Israel ; for every Church is first formed from that which has come to its end, as the Christian Church had its commencement with those whom the Lord called out of the expiring Jewish Church. The king's wives, who were of several different nations, represented, as we shall have occasion, in treating of Solomon's numerous wives and concubines, to show, the one universal Church as consisting of numerous general and particular churches, both within and beyond the pale of the visible Church. Maachah therefore represented the Church among the Gentiles, such as were those who at that time lived in Geshur Syria. Even after it became Gentile, Syria represented the knowledge of goodness and truth, because from ancient times such knowledge was preserved there, as appears from that possessed by Balaam. Absalom, therefore, as the son of Maachah, represented the truth, or knowledge of the truth, as it had descended from the Ancient and Hebrew Church, and even as it exists now in some of the more enlightened Gentile nations. The Hebrew Church, from which Syrian knowledge had been proximately derived, was far more spiritual in its character than the Church established among the Israelites.

This representative character of Absalom may be seen in the parti-

culars recorded respecting his personal gifts and address. "In all Israel there was none to be so much praised as Absalom for his beauty : from the sole of his foot even to the crown of his head there was no blemish in him. And when he polled his head, (for it was at every year's end that he polled it : because the hair was heavy on him, therefore he polled it :) he weighed the hair of his head at two hundred shekels after the king's weight." This beauty of person and unblemished perfectness of form represented the externals—the representatives and significatives of the ancient Church. "The ancients had representatives and significatives of things celestial and spiritual pertaining to the Lord's kingdom, thus to the Lord Himself. Those who understood them were called wise, and in reality were wise; for by means of them they were enabled to converse with spirits and angels, inasmuch as angelic discourse, which is incomprehensible to man, as being spiritual and celestial, when it is conveyed down to man, who is in a natural sphere, falls into representatives and significatives such as exist in the Word; and hence it is that the Word is a holy code or volume. And as the ancients were in the representatives and significatives of the Lord's kingdom, in which nothing but celestial and spiritual love prevails, they had also doctrinals which treated solely of love to God and charity to the neighbour; by virtue of which they were called wise." And then the marvellous growth of hair, whose very weight made an annual polling necessary, when that which was removed weighed two hundred shekels. Hair signifies what is natural belonging to man. Ezekiel, in treating of the new temple, says of the priests, who were to minister in it, that they shall not shave their head, nor suffer their locks to grow long; they shall only poll their heads (xliv. 20). The subject treated of under the emblem of the New Temple is the New Church. Not to shave the head or suffer the locks to grow long, but to poll the head, spiritually means that the external or natural man is not to be rejected, but is to be accommodated, so that he may be in agreement with and subordinate to the spiritual, and both to the Divine. In the other world, "those who have been rational, that is, spiritual men, with whom the natural has been rightly subordinate, appear with graceful hair; yea, in the other life it may be known from the hair what every one's quality as to the natural man is." The polling of his head every year, and the hair polled weighing two hundred shekels, represented the keeping of the natural man in subordination to the spiritual in every state of the regenerate life, and in conformity with the laws of spiritual goodness and truth.

Absalom's professions were as noble and his manners as fascinating as his person was beautiful. By taking an interest in the people's concerns, and desiring that he were made judge in the land, that he might do every man justice, and by returning great humility with

greater condescension, he stole the hearts of the men of Israel. All this is quite consistent with spirituality of character, and is indeed one of its true manifestations and legitimate results, assuming it to be sincere.

One other circumstance is accounted for by Absalom's representative character. David's love for Absalom was singularly tender. When the king sent forth his generals with the army against him, he commanded them, saying, "Deal gently for my sake with the young man, even with Absalom," and when he heard he was slain, we know in what pathetic language he lamented his death. The Lord's love for His spiritual Church, and for that spiritual truth which was nearer to His own Divine truth than was that received by the Israelitish Church, His desire for its preservation, and His sorrow over its fall and judgment, may be seen represented in the conduct of David respecting Absalom. And under this view we must regard the personal beauty and other good qualities of Absalom abstractedly from the moral state they for a time concealed. For under his personal beauty and faultless form there lay great depravity of heart and duplicity of mind, representing how the best gifts may be perversely applied to the worst of purposes, and thus profaned and utterly destroyed. This we shall see exemplified.

"It came to pass after forty years, that Absalom said unto the king, I pray thee, let me go and pay my vow, which I vowed unto the Lord, in Hebron." He professed he had vowed, when at Geshur in Syria, that if the Lord should bring him to Jerusalem, then he would serve the Lord. Hebron, we have seen, represented the spiritual Church. Where David had been anointed king of Judah, his son now proceeds in order to undermine and overturn his father's kingdom. The forty years, after which this came to pass, are believed to date from the time that David was anointed king by Samuel. Forty is the Scripture number for temptation. It was after Jesus had been forty days in the wilderness tempted of the devil that His three great temptations began. The trial which David was now to endure was the greatest he had yet experienced. Not his own familiar friend, who did eat his bread, but his own son, who had derived his existence from him, was to lift up his heel against him. This is truly the case of a man's foes being those of his own house; the son against the father, to be followed by the father against the son. When Nathan declared to David the word of the Lord, "Behold, I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house," what does this mean when understood of Him whom David represented? The Lord's own house is heaven and the Church. The words of Jehovah by Nathan must, therefore, in the highest sense, refer to trials and temptations which the Redeemer was to endure from evil brought to bear upon Him by or through those of His own

house, the members of His own family, who can have been no other than those who belonged to His Church in heaven and on earth. Understood of the Lord, of whom David was a type, whom does this rebel son, and what does his rebellion, represent? In Christian literature there is a fabled rebel angel, who drew to his standard the disaffected of the heavenly host, and made war against Him who was both his Father and his King, with the unfilial and mad intention of driving Him from His throne and reigning in His stead. Every great error is the perversion of some great truth. The unperverted truth is this. The rebel angel is, in one aspect, the angelic proprium or selfhood, and his rebellion is the excitement of this selfhood against the Lord in His great work of redemption. A conscious and open rebellion among the angels is an impossibility. It would be not only the extreme of wickedness, but the extreme of folly. But that the selfhood of the angelic host should, under certain circumstances, be excited into activity, is conceivable. The hostility of the Church on earth was conscious and open. In considering the subject in relation to the Lord and His Redemption, we must not forget that an important part of His Divine work and experience was in connection with those in the intermediate region of the spiritual world, where all judgment takes place. At the period of the Incarnation a judgment was effected there on all who had remained in the world of spirits from the time of Noah, or the beginning of the ancient Church. And to the state of judgment on these the Lord referred when He said, "I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven." There were the prisoners of hope whose deliverance the Lord effected by redemption, and there were the foes He made His footstool. This could not be accomplished without temptation and conflict. In the Church on earth, too, there was rebellion and warfare. Among the Lord's apostles there was one that betrayed Him, and that one represented the Jewish Church. Even among the Gentiles there was enmity, though not of the same malignity, and the Gentiles had their representative in Pilate. The changed economy in the government of the Lord's universal kingdom which the Incarnation involved, is sufficient to account for an uprising of the human selfhood in all His dominions during the performance of the Divine work, in which the Lord spiritually "measured the waters in the hollow of His hand, and meted out heaven with a span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance ;" or, when the Lord brought into order or reduced to obedience all things in His spiritual dominions, restoring the balance or equilibrium between heaven and hell, good and evil, spiritual and natural, a balance which had been disturbed and was wellnigh lost.

But we must not pursue the subject in this high sense. It is

sufficient to know that it has reference to the Lord, and treats of His experience as a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.

The circumstances connected with this rebellion and the death of Absalom will form the subject of another chapter.

CHAPTER XIX.

DAVID'S FLIGHT.

2 *Samuel* xv. 10.

IT is singular how easily men are deceived by specious appearances and seduced by flattering appeals to their vanity or self-love. David had won renown by great deeds, Absalom's fame rested on fair speeches, and yet the hearts of the men of Israel were alienated from the man who had made their kingdom great among the nations, and given to one who had done nothing to make it illustrious, but whose present act could not fail to bring upon it deserved reproach. But Absalom stole the hearts of the people. Although in the letter this may express nothing more than that he won them, in the spirit it expresses something very different. In the spiritual sense the men of Israel represent not only the members, but the principles, of the Church, the truths which form its faith and practice. The heart of a truth is the good that it contains; for good is the essence of which truth is the form. Truth without good is the same as faith without love. Spiritually to steal the hearts of the men of Israel, is to rob truth of its goodness, and make it subservient to our own selfish purposes. When we steal from truth its heart of goodness, we implant in it the heart of evil, because we animate it with our own self-love. The spies sent out are the false principles that put on the semblance of persuasive truths, and the trumpet-sound that is to be the sign of a commencing reign is the self-glorification that seeks to exalt itself above all the truths of the Church and above the Truth itself.

But Absalom sent for Ahithophel, David's counsellor, from his city, even from Giloh, while he offered sacrifice. It seems unaccountable that he whose counsel, when he counselled in those days, was as if a man had inquired at the oracles of God, should have joined Absalom's cause, even although there had been better grounds of hope for its success. It is a Jewish opinion that Ahithophel was Bathsheba's grandsire, and that he espoused Absalom's cause to avenge the wrong David had done her. There is no great probability in this having been his motive, even supposing the relationship, since Bathsheba was now in great honour, and her son Solomon was to be the heir

to David's throne. The reason for his identifying himself with a morally bad and doubtful cause, was most likely that which a man of worldly wisdom would have for engaging in such an enterprise, that he must profit largely by success. With all his wisdom he seems to have been a worldly man, and the wisdom of such is foolishness with God, as his name, which means brother of folly, implies, and as his wisdom turned out to be. For while his counsel to Absalom, though in itself wicked, is called good, as being favourable to Absalom's cause, it was defeated by the counsel of Hushai, who had been providentially led to be a countervailing power to Ahithophel, "For the Lord had appointed to defeat the good counsel of Ahithophel, to the intent that the Lord might bring evil upon Absalom." Here then was the wisdom of the world defeated by the wisdom of God, which these two counsellors respectively represent.

But another and very affecting spectacle is presented to us in the history of this conspiracy, which we find "was strong ; for the people increased continually with Absalom." A messenger came to David, saying, "The hearts of the men of Israel are after Absalom. And David said unto all his servants that were with him at Jerusalem, Arise, and let us flee ; for we shall not else escape from Absalom : make speed to depart, lest he overtake us suddenly, and bring evil upon us, and smite the city with the edge of the sword." David on this occasion seems to display less of the strong man than in other parts of his chequered history. But such a trial as this might well depress and unnerve him ; and trials that are spiritually like his have of necessity the tendency to make men feel their own weakness. This part of the history of David has some considerable outward resemblance to that of the Lord Himself. The king with his weeping people passed over the brook Kidron ; "and David went up by the ascent of mount Olivet, and wept as he went up, and had his head covered, and he went barefoot : and all the people that was with him covered every man his head, and they went up, weeping as they went up." Jesus, after telling His disciples of His departure, when sorrow filled their hearts, left Jerusalem, and went to the mount of Olives, over the dark Cedron into Gethsemane, to undergo His great temptation, and to be afterwards betrayed into the hands of His enemies by Judas, who, like the traitor Ahithophel, went and hanged himself. Nor is there an outward resemblance only, but there is, if we thought well to pursue it, an inward correspondence also. The outward results, indeed, were different. But in our Lord's case the counsel of His betrayer was defeated in the Lord's resurrection, which was a greater deliverance than that which David experienced. But there was something in David's experience that resembled that of his Lord. When David came to Bahurim, "thence came out a man of

the family of the house of Saul, whose name was Shimei, the son of Gera : he came forth, and cursed still as he came. And he cast stones at David, and at all the servants of king David : and all the people and all the mighty men were on his right hand and on his left. And thus said Shimei when he cursed, Come out, come out, thou bloody man, and thou man of Belial : the Lord hath returned upon thee all the blood of the house of Saul, in whose stead thou hast reigned ; and the Lord hath delivered the kingdom into the hand of Absalom thy son : and, behold, thou art taken in thy mischief, because thou art a bloody man." Our Lord endured the reproaches of His enemies, and their violence against Him was still greater than that which Shimei showed against David. And in this case we see a shadow of the Lord's forbearance in David's meekness under the brutal conduct of this man. When Abishai desired that the king would allow him to take off Shimei's head, he said, " So let him curse, because the Lord hath said unto him, Curse David. . . . Behold, my son, which came forth of my bowels, seeketh my life : how much more now may this Benjamite do it ? . . . It may be that the Lord will look on mine affliction, and that the Lord will requite me good for his cursing this day." This humiliation of David, like that of our Lord, was no doubt the means of his exaltation.

And as it was with them so is it with us. Our endurance is the means and even the measure of our exaltation. We must, it is true, suffer in the right spirit. The promise is to those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake ; theirs only is the kingdom of heaven. It is possible for us to suffer for the sake of reward, which is for the sake of ourselves, and not for the Lord's sake. David no doubt had the grace of humility under suffering, but he did not always show in prosperity the same meek spirit that he exhibited in adversity, and notably in the case of Shimei. But we know that he belonged to a race and age in which great humility, like devout sanctity, could be felt intensely yet superficially. We must cultivate these and other religious conditions as abiding states, and not merely as transient feelings, much less as mere outward forms. We must rend our hearts and not our garments, we must shed the tears of penitence and not merely of sadness ; we must cover the head and make bare the feet, by feeling as well as confessing that, in ourselves, there is nothing true and nothing good, that our sins are as a thick covering that shuts out from our minds the light and influence of heaven, and that makes our lives of the earth earthy.

One of the uses of adversity, whether temporal or spiritual, is to induce a state of humility, in which the Christian sees and feels his own nothingness, and his distance from Him who is all, and to deepen his sense of dependence upon that Being who is the Author of all his true light and joy.

The application of the historical events we are now considering to the Lord, and to those who are of His household, is made evident to us from the writings of David himself. The third Psalm is inscribed "a psalm of David, when he fled from Absalom his son." And we learn from the "Internal sense of the prophets and psalms," that this inspired composition is concerning the Lord when He was in temptation and subjugated the hells, and then was in a state of humiliation, and prayed to the Father. Psalm lv. is generally understood by commentators to relate to the same event; and Ahithophel's treason is supposed to be that over which David mourns where he says, "It was not an enemy that reproached me; then I could have borne it: neither was it he that hated me that did magnify himself against me; then I would have hid myself from him: but it was thou, a man mine equal, my guide, and mine acquaintance. We took sweet counsel together, and walked unto the house of God in company." Whether or not the psalm can be applied wholly to the circumstances of the present history, the description of the faithless friend is one that entered into the Lord's experience, not merely in the treason of Judas, but in that which it represented, the defection and enmity of His church. And it forms part of the experience of His disciples. It is possible that those with whom we, as disciples, may have taken sweet counsel, and walked unto the house of God in company, may cease to be friends and even become enemies, or, on the other hand, that we may become enemies to them. But there is another way in which this is realized. The counsellor which we have in our own understanding may fail us in our utmost need. And so far as it has been natural it must and will fail us in states of trial, which are permitted to show us on what a frail reed we have been leaning. But the trial, which discovers to us on what a staff of a broken reed we have trusted, and which may have pierced the hand that leaned upon it, brings to our hand another and better support; as David in losing one counsellor had another divinely directed to supply his place. And it was when David had come to the top of Olivet, where he worshipped God, that, behold, Hushai the Archite came to meet him with his coat rent, and earth upon his head. When the afflicted soul worships God from love, or from the highest affections of the heart, light and comfort come from Him who only can give help in time of trouble.

By David's direction Hushai returned to Jerusalem, where Absalom had now established himself, and, feigning himself a friend and follower, was received into Absalom's favour. David had prayed the Lord to turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness; and he now evidently regarded the appearance of this Archite as an answer to his prayer, for he saw in Hushai the means by which the object of his

petition might be accomplished. An opportunity soon occurred of serving the king by defeating the counsel of Ahithophel. By the advice of this clever but unscrupulous counsellor, Absalom had, in the sight of all Israel, gone in unto his father's concubines, and by this profane act consummated his iniquity, and made it representative of the sin, in its worst form, of spiritual adultery, which is the profanation of spiritual goodness. This was the fulfilment of the Lord's judgment on David delivered by Nathan : "I will take thy wives before thine eyes, and give them unto thy neighbour, and he shall lie with thy wives in the sight of this sun. For thou didst it secretly : but I will do this thing before all Israel, and before the sun." This is a terrible exemplification of the law of life declared by our Lord, and to which the evil as well as the good are subject : "There is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed ; neither hid, that shall not be known. Therefore whatsoever ye have spoken in darkness shall be heard in the light ; and that which ye have spoken in the ear in closets shall be proclaimed upon the house-tops" (Luke xii. 2, 3). Innocence and truth, however hid in the inner man from the eyes of others, will come forth ; and evil and falsehood, however carefully concealed, will be ultimately manifested. Evils were sometimes committed and punished in descending generations, because these represented the offspring of the will and understanding, which are affections and thoughts ; and these in their turn give birth to words and acts.

In giving this evil advice Ahithophel was successful, for the iniquity of Absalom was not yet full. But here his power for evil ended. He advised immediate action against David, and offered, with twelve thousand men, to go himself in pursuit of the king, while he and the people that followed him were weary. His sudden appearance would strike terror into them ; the people would flee : he would smite David only, and all the people would be brought to Absalom, and would be in peace. This saying pleased Absalom well, and all the elders of Israel. But Absalom wished also to hear the opinion of Hushai. He represented to Absalom that his father and his men were mighty men, and were chafed in their minds, as a bear robbed of her whelps in the field ; that as a man of war David would not lodge with the people, but would be hid somewhere. He therefore counselled that all Israel should be gathered from Dan even to Beer-sheba, that Absalom should go to battle in his own person, and, with an overwhelming force, light upon him as dew falleth on the ground, so that of him and of all the men that were with him they should not leave so much as one. The counsel of Hushai prevailed. "For the Lord had appointed to defeat the good counsel of Ahithophel, to the intent that the Lord might bring evil upon Absalom."

When David fled from Jerusalem he was followed by Zadok and the

Levites, bearing the ark of the covenant of God ; and they set down the ark ; and Abiathar went up, until all the people had done passing out of the city. A ceremonial this like that which was commanded and observed when the people passed over Jordan into the Promised Land. Here as there, though the circumstances were so different, the ark had a solemnizing and sanctifying influence. It was a sign that the Divine presence was with the king and his people ; for it represented the Lord as the Divine Law. But David desired the priest to carry back the ark of God into the city ; expressing a pious resignation to the Divine will, whether it might please the Lord to bestow His favour upon him, and bring him again, and show him both the ark and his habitation, or to say, I have no delight in thee. "The king said also unto Zadok the priest, Art not thou a seer ? return unto the city in peace, and your two sons with you, Ahimaaz thy son, and Jonathan the son of Abiathar. See, I will tarry in the plain of the wilderness, until there come word from you to certify me." David's heart is in Jerusalem, and there the ark of the covenant between him and his God should retire, to dwell securely in the inmost of his affections, while, as to the outer man, he tarries in the plain of the wilderness of trial and temptation.

And the time has now come when the priest is to convey to David word that is to certify him as to the state of affairs in relation to himself and his kingdom. Hushai, whom David had instructed to send him everything he could hear, communicated to the two priests the counsel that Ahithophel and he had given to Absalom, and desired them to send quickly, and tell David, saying, "Lodge not this night in the plains of the wilderness, but speedily pass over ; lest the king be swallowed up, and all the people that are with him." The two sons of the priests stayed by En-rogel, the fuller's fountain, whose name is expressive of purifying trial ; for "who shall stand when the Lord appeareth ? for He is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' sope" (Mal. iii. 2). They were to carry the tidings, but they might not be seen in the city ; and a wench went and told them ; and they went and told king David. The circle which had commenced from David was now complete, and had returned to him again. Yet this circle was in danger of being rendered incomplete and ineffective. Jonathan and Ahimaaz were discovered before they could reach the king ; but they found a man friendly to their cause in Bahurim, who concealed them in a well, over whose mouth the woman spread a covering with ground corn thereon, so that when Absalom's servants came in search of them they could not be found, especially as, like Rahab, she not only concealed the pursued, but misdirected their pursuers. The truth was hid from them ; and they believed the false to be true, as the evil are prone to do. The evil, indeed, create the falsity which they believe ; for although in the Scripture narrative the concealment and the false

report are from others, it is the state of the evil that creates it. It is like the appearance which the letter of Scripture presents, that God hides His truth from the wise and deceives the false prophets (Matt. xi. 25 ; Ezek. xiv. 9). The truth is concealed from those who would apply it to an evil use ; and they are permitted to be in false persuasions, as less injurious to them than to believe the truths, while it diminishes their power of doing evil to the good.

The mission for conveying tidings to the king, which was now secured, owed its success in a great measure to the courage and wisdom of two women. They represent affections, which are links of connection between the intellectual principles that enter into the circle of order, which begins and ends in Him who is the First and the Last in all things, the least as well as the greatest.

When the two messengers were released from their place of concealment, they went and told king David ; and in accordance with the advice they were commissioned to give, "David arose, and all the people that were with him, and they passed over Jordan : by the morning light there lacked not one of them that was not gone over Jordan." Although now out of Canaan itself, David and the people were not out of the Israelitish possessions ; for the place to which they went belonged to the tribe of Gad. Mahanaim has been already mentioned as signifying two camps, Jacob having so named it as the place where the angels of God met him. Here David and the people found those who were to them as ministering angels. All their wants were supplied, and their smallest comforts attended to ; "for they said, The people is hungry, and weary, and thirsty, in the wilderness." Those gifts brought to David are, spiritually understood, the offerings which the faithful present to the Lord, as it is recorded of the pious women who were of the Lord's disciples, that they ministered unto Him of their substance (Luke viii. 3) ; and, in a lower sense, are the ministrations of the natural to the spiritual mind. These consist of the things that sustain and nourish the mind, knowledge and science, goodness and truth, charity and faith, affection and delight. These are the means of satisfying the wants of the soul after suffering hunger, weariness, and thirst in the wilderness of trial and temptation.

David and the people that were with him have gone over Jordan, Absalom passed over Jordan also, he and all the men of Israel with him. The fate of the kingdom of Israel was therefore to be decided on the other side Jordan, in that part of the Holy Land which represented the natural mind or the external man, which is the scene of all such conflicts.

CHAPTER XX.

THE DEFEAT AND DEATH OF ABSALOM.

2 *Samuel* xviii.

THE relation of parent and child, and the sympathy and love that naturally exist between them, are convincing evidences of the wisdom and beneficence of the Creator. All creatures are inspired with the love of their offspring. We can see a reason for it, since it would be impossible for the animal kingdom in general and for the human race in particular to exist without it. But can we not trace or assign it to some cause? Is it a natural development, or is it the result or design, or does it originate in the attributes of the Creator Himself? Is there not in the Divine nature something answering to this most essential element of human nature? The teaching of the New Church traces it to the Divine Love itself, in which creation had its origin. There are three things that constitute the essence of Divine Love, to love others who are out of, or without Himself, to desire to be one with them, and to make them happy from Himself. As man was created from this Love, so also was he created for it. The sphere emanating from this Love pervades the universe, and affects every one according to his state. This sphere more immediately affects parents, inspiring them with a tender love towards their offspring, and with a desire to be one with them, and to make them happy. It affects also the evil as well as the good. This universal sphere affects in a peculiar manner those who receive the love of God, as all do who believe in God and love their neighbour, the charity which reigns with them being an image of that love. The love of children for their parents is the reflex of parental love. For it may be said of human paternal love as it is of Divine Fatherly Love, "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us." The love of children for their parents is as necessary as the love of parents for their children. Without love there can be no true honour, without honour there can be no true obedience, and without obedience there can be no order and improvement, and without all there can be no domestic happiness. Parents are seldom deficient in love, however much they may be in wisdom to direct it. Children are more liable to come short, partly, no doubt, from injudicious training, of which we find some very serious cases in Scripture, and partly from the general imperfection of fallen human nature, and the impatience of restraint which is natural to the young. In the Scriptures, therefore, we find the inculcation of filial, much more than

of parental duty ; while one of the ten commandments is, "Honour thy father and thy mother." One of the acts which St. Paul enumerates as the sign of a reprobate mind is disobedience to parents (Rom. i. 30).

When we consider the origin of parental and of filial love, we must see that persistent opposition to a parent's will, and, as in the case of Absalom, open rebellion against a parent's personal and kingly authority, is to disregard the dictates, not only of the best natural affection, but of the highest spiritual affection also. Such conduct is not only rebellion against the authority and government of the earthly father, but of the heavenly Father also ; not only against the temporal but of the eternal King. The lesser evil contains the greater. For the Divine command, to honour father and mother, comprehends the higher command to honour the Lord and His kingdom. And the violation of this higher command is the spiritual evil which the rebellion of Absalom represented.

When David found himself compelled to meet his rebellious son in deadly strife, he numbered the people that were with him, and set captains of thousands and captains of hundreds over them. Moreover he formed the whole army into three divisions, which he placed under the command of Joab, Abishai, and Ittai the Gittite. This spiritually means a Divine arrangement in heavenly order of all the principles of goodness and truth in the spiritual mind, to meet the opposing principles of evil and falsity in the natural mind. All spiritual conflict resolves itself into this. We can indeed consider the opposite principles as existing separately in different minds, or either of them as predominating over the other in the same mind. But all spiritual conflict is mental conflict, and the final result is the judgment of truth for or against a man, according as he has acted in agreement with or in opposition to its laws and teaching.

When David had appointed the leaders of his army, he said to the people, "I will surely go forth with you myself also. But the people answered, Thou shalt not go forth : for if we flee away, they will not care for us ; neither if half of us die, will they care for us : but now thou art worth ten thousand of us : therefore now it is better that thou succour us out of the city." It was the great object in ancient warfare to kill or capture the king in battle. But there is another reason for us why it was expedient for David not to go forth personally into the conflict. It is better in certain circumstances that the ruling principle should not come out into open conflict with that which is opposed to it. Moses determined the fate, and even the progress of the battle which Israel fought with Amalek, not by going out with the army, but by standing on the top of a hill, and holding up the rod of God in his hands. David, it is true, proposed himself to go with the people, and such is the will of the Lord, and of the Truth, in which He is present

with us in our spiritual conflicts. And He is with us, even when He does not go forth into the battle. The people's request showed the value they placed on the king's life. And their estimation of the value of the king's life, in comparison of the value of their own, is expressive of that state of mind when the leading and governing principle of religion is esteemed as above all price, compared with its subordinate and common truths. In religion men often contend about matters of secondary importance, and seem little concerned for essential principles; nay, they sometimes sacrifice the essential to the secondary, or even to the formal, either by magnifying the worth of secondary things, or contending for matters of faith to the destruction of charity, or exalting ritual to the degradation of piety. The people, when they went forth to battle, did not think that, by denying themselves of the king's presence, they were depriving themselves of his aid. They expected he would succour them out of the city. It is not always by the outward and open, but by the inward and hidden operation of the ruling principle that the victory is gained. David's spirit went forth with the people. And yet although it was the spirit of victory, it was also the spirit of salvation, even of him whom his army had gone to oppose. For his command to the three commanders was, "Deal gently for my sake with the young man, even with Absalom."

The battle that took place between the two contending armies in this unnatural civil war is, like Scripture battles generally, very briefly related, for, with the exception of the main incident, we cannot say it is described. "The people went out into the field against Israel: and the battle was in the wood of Ephraim." We may conclude from this that it was chiefly the men of the tribes of Israel who had adhered to the house of Saul that joined Absalom, while those who remained faithful to David were chiefly of the tribe of Judah. The wood of Ephraim, in which the battle took place, was not in the territory of the tribe of Ephraim, which was in the centre of Palestine, but was near Mahanaim, thus on the other side of Jordan. Appropriately it was in that region of Israel's inheritance which represented the external man, where man's evils reside and where conflict with them takes place. The wood of Ephraim also is characteristically representative of the immediate scene of the battle. For although the wood of Ephraim was not in the territory of the tribe of that name, it has the same meaning as if it had, with this difference, that in the Holy Land means in the inner man, and out of the Holy Land means in the outer man. Ephraim signifies the intellectual principle of the natural or sensual part of the mind.

In this wood "the people of Israel were slain before the servants of David, and there was there a great slaughter that day of twenty thousand men. For the battle was there scattered over the face of all the

country : and the wood devoured more people that day than the sword devoured." The number slain is expressive of the nature rather than the extent of destruction. A great slaughter means a destruction of good rather than of truth ; and the number slain implies that the result of the conflict was, on the side of the vanquished, the extinction of spiritual life, even to the remains of goodness and truth. This is especially the result of the evil of profanation, which the sin of Absalom represented, and which, we shall see, is further indicated by the singular cause and manner of his death.

"Absalom rode upon a mule, and the mule went under the thick boughs of a great oak, and his head caught hold of the oak, and he was taken up between the heaven and the earth ; and the mule that was under him went away."

Under the Israelitish and Jewish dispensation, kings and their sons rode upon mules, and judges and their sons rode upon asses ; and indeed kings rode upon she-mules, and their sons upon he-mules ; and judges rode upon she-asses, and their sons upon he-asses. And this was for the sake of the inner sense of Divine inspiration. For as animals signify affections, the female signifies the affection of goodness and the male the affection of truth : and this is the distinction which exists actually and representatively between a father and a son. But taking animals in the general sense as denoting affections, the mule signifies the affection of rational truth, and the ass the affection of natural or scientific truth.

There are three animals useful to man which are frequently mentioned in the Scriptures : the horse, the mule, and the ass ; and they correspond to the three kinds or degrees of the affections and perception of truth : spiritual, rational, and natural ; or what may be called intelligence, reason, and knowledge. From this also the mule derives its signification ; because the rational perception of truth is produced from the union of the spiritual and natural perception of truth : the rational faculty being itself the result of the conjunction of inward discernment and outward knowledge.

In the Scriptures the horse, the mule, and the ass are frequently mentioned in such a way as to show that they have a meaning beyond that of the letter. The armies of heaven, and even the Lord Himself, are described in the Book of Revelation as riding on white horses, where it must be plain that a spiritual meaning must be contained in that of the letter. And when we regard the horse as the symbol of intelligence, or understanding, the description becomes truly significant ; since it is by the understanding of the pure or spiritual truths of the Word that the Lord and His kingdom are brought near to us : and this sense of the passage is rendered still more evident when we reflect that the Lord is there called "the Word of God."

The Lord also when He was in the world rode into Jerusalem on an ass and the colt the foal of an ass, to represent that He had obtained dominion over all the natural and rational principles of the human nature He assumed in the world; and by means of which He comes to His Church, as the Judge and King. And to show His judicial and regal authority, He entered the temple and cast out the money-changers and all who bought and sold within its sacred precincts.

But the mule upon which Absalom rode is not to be regarded as representing the rational faculty and its affection and perception in a state of order and of useful activity, but perverted and applied to an evil purpose. In the abstract sense the mule represents rational truth, which can be either used or abused, preserved or perverted. And when that which is in itself good and true and useful is perverted, it becomes evil and false and injurious. And what faculty is more easily perverted than reason—what power may be more perversely employed? Is not the rejection of religion and of revelation, and even the denial of God Himself, done in every instance in the name of reason? And not only is religion denied, but falsified, under the authority of the same plastic faculty. Whenever indeed the natural will is allowed to lead, the reason is easily made to follow; for there are always abundant reasons for the confirmation of what any one has a desire to believe or an interest in believing. Nor is the agency of this faculty employed only in matters of faith or of opinion. Whatever we ardently desire to do or to possess, we employ our reason to accomplish or acquire; and so far is this the case, reason may be made the instrument of unscrupulously ministering to the blind impulses of the will.

When the rational faculty becomes thus perverse, it leads into and confirms what is opposite to goodness and truth; and involves the mind in the mazes of error, and leads away into all evil. The tendency of perverse rationality to the errors and evils that destroy, is described in the succeeding incidents—the mule's carrying Absalom under the thick boughs of a great oak, and his head being caught in the branches. In Scripture a wood or forest signifies the natural mind, especially when it is in a comparatively uncultivated state; as a garden signifies the rational mind, highly cultivated and adorned with the graces of love and truth. The battle between the armies of David and Absalom was in the wood of Ephraim; for Ephraim signifies the intellectual principle of the Church, and the wood of Ephraim denotes the understanding of the natural mind, or the natural understanding. Therefore it was that more of Absalom's army were destroyed by the wood than by the sword; denoting that, in corresponding circumstances, the greatest destruction is the result of the fallacies in the natural understanding itself. Absalom himself was

also therefore overcome and led to destruction by the same means; and in his case the particular cause is mentioned: "he was carried under the thick boughs of a great oak." The oak-tree signifies the most general kind of the perception of truth which the natural understanding acquires. The thick boughs mentioned here and in other instances, include the idea of what is intertwined or tangled; and this is always expressive of the spiritual idea of what is involved or obscure, such as is all knowledge when seen only through the fallacious eye of sense. When spiritual things are apprehended only by the senses, or when they are believed only so far as they can be apprehended sensuously, they become entangled in the appearances which arise from the fallacies of the senses; and these fallacies are properly signified by the thick boughs or entangled branches of the oak. In this sense they are frequently mentioned in Scripture. In Isaiah ix. 18: "Wickedness burneth as the fire: it shall devour the briers and thorns, and shall kindle in the thickets [or intertwistings] of the forest, and they shall mount up like the lifting up of smoke." Fire which catcheth at thorns and kindles in the entangled branches of the forest is self-love; for errors and fallacies are ever ready to favour evil affections. In the 31st of Ezekiel the meaning of thick or intertwined boughs is still more obvious: "Behold, the Assyrian was a cedar in Lebanon with fair branches, and with a shadowing shroud, and of an high stature; and his top was among the thick [or intertwined] boughs. . . . Therefore his height was exalted above all the trees of the field, and his boughs were multiplied. . . . Therefore thus saith the Lord God; Because thou hast lifted up thyself in height, and he hath shot up his top among the thick boughs, and his heart is lifted up in his height; I have therefore delivered him into the hand of the mighty one of the heathen."

Throughout the Word Assyria signifies the rational mind; and in the present case that mind perverted: the Assyrian is therefore described as a tree having intertwined branches, to indicate the tendency of natural reason to become entangled in the delusive appearances which the senses present, when they alone are consulted on the nature of spiritual things. When any one follows the teachings of his senses, and pursues only sensual pleasures and worldly dominion, he is like Absalom in the wood of Ephraim, overshadowed and bewildered, and is carried he knows not whither to his own destruction. Absalom was caught by the head in the thick boughs of the oak. The head of the body signifies the interiors of the mind; and the mind becomes interiorly under the influence and power of sensuous reasonings, when these are directed by an evil heart. But we are to understand that Absalom was caught by the hair, and thus by the head. And the hair signifies what is external. The hair of the head signifies the ultimate

of man's will and understanding. It was from this that Samson's strength lay in his hair; for spiritual power is in the outward manifestation of inward principles. Absalom's hair is particularly mentioned, as we have seen, in chapter xiv.; and besides his abundant locks, his person is said to have been more praised for beauty than any other in Israel. Considered simply as a king's son, Absalom represented one of the primary truths which are derived from, and have respect to, the Divine Truth in heaven and the Church; and the beauty of his person and the abundance of his hair have respect to the beauty and gracefulness which are the natural attributes of such truths in their own proper form. But when spiritual principles are perverted, and applied to evil purposes, the outward beauty may indeed be retained and cultivated, because it is a means of deceiving those who look only upon, and judge by, the outward appearance; but it is no longer a true index of the inward state of the mind. The same evil may exist in spiritual as in natural life, and in the things of the mind as in those of the body. Personal beauty and gracefulness of manners must always command admiration, as everything beautiful and graceful deservedly does with those who are right minded; but no right-minded person will accept the outward forms of grace and beauty for those higher qualities—the grace and beauty of the mind, which they were designed by the Creator to embody and represent. When the outward beauty of holiness is all that exists in any one, it may indeed deceive the ignorant or unguarded into an unwise admiration of the man, as many of the Israelitish people no doubt were deceived and seduced by the beauty and blandishments of Absalom; but there is one part of their conduct which the true Israelite will never imitate—their being led by their fascination into an act of rebellion. One of the points of his personal beauty was the immediate cause of Absalom's destruction. That hair which grew so luxuriantly was the immediate occasion of his death. Absalom, when his head caught hold of the oak, being "taken up between the heaven and the earth," and the mule that was under him going away, presents a singularly striking ensample of that state of profanation which his conduct represented. This state and its consequences are minutely described in the Writings. There are several degrees of profanation. We will speak only of two.

Those who practically separate faith from charity divide the mind into two parts. By the truths of the Word they turn themselves to heaven, and by evils of life they turn themselves towards hell, so that they halt between them. By means of thought concerning God, and concerning heaven and eternal life, they have some degree of conjunction with heaven, but only by obscure thought, and not by the affection of charity, for this they have not: wherefore by the affection of self-love and the love of the world, they are conjoined to hell. Hence

it may appear that they are between heaven and hell, inasmuch as they look with their eyes towards heaven, while with their hearts they are inclined towards hell. To do this is to profane, and the lot of profaners in the other life is of all others the worst.

Those who have been guilty of profanation are signified by the lukewarm, who are neither cold nor hot (Rev. iii. 6), and their separation from the Lord is meant by their being spued out of His mouth. And to be thus separated from the Lord is to be neither in heaven nor in hell, but in a place apart, deprived of human life, where there are mere phantasies. The reason of this is that they mixed truths with falsities and goods with evils, thus holy things with things profane, to such an extent that they cannot be separated. And as the profanator cannot be prepared either for heaven or for hell, the whole of his rational life is rooted out, and only the ultimates of life remain, which when separated from the inward life are mere phantasies.

But Absalom, though suspended between heaven and earth, was yet alive. A certain man told Joab that he saw Absalom hanged in an oak. And Joab "took three darts in his hand, and thrust them through the heart of Absalom, while he was yet alive in the midst of the oak. And ten young men that bare Joab's armour compassed about and smote Absalom, and slew him." In this Joab acted in opposition to the injunction of the king, not in forgetfulness, for the man who told him repeated the king's command, as a reason for not killing Absalom himself. The king's wish and Joab's act, as contrary to each other, exemplifies, or at least represents, two opposite principles of judgment, the principles of good and truth. Good raises all to heaven; truth condemns all to hell. This finds its expression in the theological doctrine of a conflict in the Divine mind between mercy and justice, on which is grounded the tenet of substitutional satisfaction. The opposite tendency and judgment of goodness and truth are not in the Divine but in the human mind. Goodness and truth are one in God and ever act in perfect unity. In the human mind they may be divided. Good may exist without truth, and truth may exist without good. All who are in good, even if it be without truth, are saved, but all who are in truth without good are lost. The truth which men have condemns them. Truth may be called the knowledge of goodness. The Lord, as the Truth, is the great Teacher, all whose lessons have goodness for their end. But if the lessons of truth do not terminate in goodness, but are neglected, and especially if they are perverted, as all knowledge may be, to an evil end, then truth condemns the soul to hell. In all such cases it is not the Lord who condemns, but the words which He has spoken. The evil are, therefore, practically their own judges; they carry the law of their condemnation in themselves. Yet while the Lord's truth as a judge condemns, His love as a father yearns for

the safety, and mourns over the loss of His children. The royal father's passionate grief over the death of his rebellious son, was but an imperfect type of the sorrowing love of Him who wept over the profligate city while He pronounced its doom, and who sent up in His agony a prayer for those who were nailing Him to the cross. "O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!" What David desired to have done, David's Lord did. He died for His rebellious children. Not in their stead did the Lord die for them, but not the less to save them from death. Moses and Paul expressed a desire to die for their rebellious brethren, as David did for his rebellious son; and this was the only way in which they could express it. But this is not the Divine way, nor is it consistent with Divine order. When Moses prayed to be blotted out of the Lord's book rather than that his people should not be forgiven, the Lord gave this answer to his prayer, "Whosoever hath sinned against Me, him will I blot out of My book." Infinite love and mercy cannot save the guilty, but infinite wisdom has found out a way by which sinners may turn from their wickedness and live.

CHAPTER XXI.

DAVID'S RETURN TO JERUSALEM.

2 Samuel xix.

SEVERAL incidents are recorded to have taken place after the death of Absalom, which are interesting and instructive, but some of which must be passed over and others briefly noticed.

After Absalom was slain David still remained at Mahanaim; and there was strife among the people throughout all the tribes of Israel, saying, "The king saved us out of the hand of our enemies, and he delivered us out of the hand of the Philistines; and now he is fled out of the land for Absalom. And Absalom, whom we anointed king over us, is dead in battle. Now therefore why speak ye not a word of bringing the king back?" There is no appearance of any of the effects that, in modern times, follow a rebellion, of bringing the leading rebels, at least, to account for their conduct. The people, who had anointed Absalom king over them, now that he is dead, return to their allegiance to their legitimate sovereign, and contend among themselves which of the tribes shall be the first to bring him back. The idea and the movement originated, apparently, with the people themselves. Yet David desired to return to Jerusalem, though he did not express his desire till "the speech of all Israel had come to the king, even to his

house." This is like the Lord's way of dealing with His people. Their duty is known to them, and they are left to discharge it, or to return, if they have departed from it. The Divine will is that the people should think and act as of themselves. The Lord says to the rebellious, "Turn unto Me, and I will turn unto you." And yet it is the Lord who turns the sinner and backslider to Himself. His Spirit is ever striving with the wicked, but its influence is internal and secret, that men may have the power, if they have the will, to return to Him who has saved them out of the hand of their enemies in His work of redemption, and it may be, to some extent, in the work of regeneration. When they freely turn to the Lord, then the Lord turns to them. David, when the people of Israel moved, "sent to Zadok and to Abiathar the priests, saying, Speak unto the elders of Judah, saying, Why are ye the last to bring the king back to his house? Ye are my brethren, ye are my bones and my flesh: wherefore then are ye the last to bring back the king?" Here the word proceeds from the king through the priests to Judah; as the Lord operates upon His Church and people through the highest affections of love in the heart into the principles of good in the will, that these may meet and unite with the perceptions of truth in the understanding. David's speech through the priests "bowed the heart of all the men of Judah, even as the heart of one man; so that they sent this word unto the king, Return thou, and all thy servants."

The king, when this word came to him, was on the other side Jordan, whither he had fled to escape the power of Absalom, and where he had been compelled to meet him as an enemy. In the trials and temptations of the spiritual life there are experiences analogous to this. In the rebellious motions in our own minds, which consist in subordinate affections seeking to usurp the dominion exercised by the principle they should obey, there is for a time a seeming state of inverted order, a state in which, to speak in the language of the present history, the king is driven from his throne, and one who ought both to love and obey him, takes his place, and claims to rule. All Christians have experiences of states in which doubt has seemed to have taken the place of faith and distrust of confidence, and even when spiritual love seems to yield to the claims of natural affection. These are, to the tried soul, states of tribulation, the issue of which, if faithful to his God and to himself, is, to bring the Christian back to the Salem from which he has been driven, with greater power and security than he had previously enjoyed; even as the Lord, our pattern, both in our trials and our triumphs, was driven into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil, and, after He had overcome, returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee. In the highest sense, these trials and triumphs of David are types of those of the Son of Man.

In returning to Jerusalem David was met by the men of Judah, who had come to Gilgal to conduct the king over Jordan. David re-entered the Holy Land as the Israelites had entered it, by making the passage of the Jordan; but the circumstances were now changed. To allow the children to pass into Canaan, Jordan was divided, so that they walked on the bed of the river, but David passed over the river itself, in what is called a ferry-boat. The first passage was grander and more imposing, and was, like the passage of the Red Sea, effected by means of a miracle. But David's passage over Jordan represented spiritual progression in a higher state. Their passage of the Jordan represented a state of trial, his represented a state of triumph. Gilgal was the first place where the children of Israel halted, when they came up from the wilderness into the Holy Land, and where, by a painful rite, they rolled away the reproach of Egypt; it was the last halting-place of the children of Judah, when they came down from Jerusalem with rejoicing, to meet their king. That which is first in the progress of the spiritual life is also the last. Obedience is the first and lowest service and the last and highest virtue; but the first obedience comes from a sense of duty, the last springs from a feeling of love. So with all the other elements of religion. All have a first state which is natural, and a last state which is spiritual. There is a truth that leads to good and a truth that is derived from good. There is a faith that leads to charity and a faith that is derived from charity. These are the Jericho and the Gilgal that change their character while they retain their name; and which have their analogues in the ladder of Jacob, on which he saw the angels of God ascending and descending, the lowest step being the first to those who went up from earth to heaven, and the last to those who came down from heaven to earth.

Unlike the children of Israel, who on their entrance into the land of Canaan were met by enemies, and whose progress through it was a continued warfare, David was received by admiring friends, and he went up with the tribes of his people, who vied with each other in doing him honour, and no doubt made a triumphal entry into Jerusalem.

Among those who came to Gilgal with the men of Judah to meet the king was one who had been a bitter and insulting enemy, now come as a humble suppliant for mercy. Shimei, who, when David was in adversity, cast stones and dust at him and cursed him as a bloody man, "hasted and came down with the men of Judah to meet king David," and threw himself at the king's feet, confessing that he had done perversely, not faintly boasting of his prompt zeal to hail the king's return: "I am come the first this day of all the house of Joseph to go down to meet my lord the king." Shimei was a Benjamite. As the last son of Jacob and brother of Joseph, both the children of Rachel, Benjamin, and the tribe which sprung from him, hold a

conspicuous place among the persons and principles that constitute the Church and kingdom of the Lord. Benjamin represents those who are in the truth of good, or what is the same, those who are in the faith of charity. When the principles which form this state are perverted, we have the character so shamefully exemplified and so plainly represented in the conduct of Shimei, when he cursed the king in the day of his trouble. False and evil, faithless and uncharitable, the perverser acts, as this Benjamite confesses he had acted perversely. Yet such is the clemency of Him against whom such characters direct their hostility, that confession and supplication never fail to receive forgiveness, even though those who are pardoned be like the servant in the parable, whose lord forgave him ten thousand talents, simply because he asked him, but who the next hour refused to remit to his fellow-servant a debt of an hundred pence. These acts of clemency express the Lord's boundless love and forgiving mercy, but they do not always express a state of forgiven sin in those who receive them. So long, indeed, as, like Shimei and the unmerciful servant, they do not themselves violate the law of forgiveness, or break the covenant into which they have openly or tacitly entered, they are safe ; but the moment they who have obtained mercy cease to be merciful, or those who have sinned transgress the law under which they live in safeguard, they forfeit all they had obtained, and learn by bitter experience that only the merciful obtain mercy, and that the soul that sinneth it shall die. Shimei's repentance, as we shall see, was too much like that of the unforgiving servant. He acknowledged his sin and asked for clemency, and he was forgiven. There was indeed an accusing spirit in the person of Joab's brother, who looked upon Shimei's offence with the pitiless eye of truth, and deprecated the pardon of one who had cursed the Lord's anointed, but David rebuked him, as one of the sons of Zeruiah with whom he had nothing to do in such matters, and gave the answer, worthy of a king and noble in a conqueror, "Shall there any man be put to death this day in Israel? for do not I know that I am this day king over Israel?" David now knew better than before this terrible ordeal that his throne was established. His trials, even of this character, are not yet ended ; but every trial that the faithful undergo leaves its own conviction of increased stability in truth and righteousness.

Another man of a different character came down to meet the king. "Mephibosheth the son of Saul came down to meet the king, and had neither dressed his feet, nor trimmed his beard, nor washed his clothes, from the day the king departed until the day he came again in peace." Being asked, "Wherefore wentest not thou with me, Mephibosheth?" he answered that his servant had deceived and slandered him. In chapter xvi. we read, when David in his flight was a little past the top

of Mount Olivet, Ziba the servant of Mephibosheth met him with a couple of asses laden with provisions. Being asked where was his master's son, he said, "Behold, he abideth at Jerusalem : for he said, To day shall the house of Israel restore me the kingdom of my father. Then said the king to Ziba, Behold, thine are all that pertained to Mephibosheth." Jonathan's son expresses himself in the highest terms of the king's wisdom, and his kindness to him ; whose father's house were but dead men before the king. "And the king said unto him, Why speakest thou any more of thy matters? I have said, Thou and Ziba divide the land. And Mephibosheth said unto the king, Yea, let him take all, forasmuch as my lord the king is come again in peace unto his own house." Those who judge of sacred history by the ordinary standard, have considered David's treatment of Jonathan's son to be censurable. And certainly there is a seeming inconsistency in David's easy and complete forgiveness of Shimei's confessed sin, and his leaving uncensured Ziba's cruel and unacknowledged falsehood ; and in leaving his maligned master's wrong unredressed, except the restoration to him of the half of the land of which Ziba had defrauded him. But there is some deeper reason than appears on the surface. Ziba, though the servant of Jonathan's son, adhered to David, and ministered to him, in his adversity, when appearances were so much against his interests that even his wise counsellor forsook him. It is possible also that, when Mephibosheth's explanation came, David did not receive it with undoubting confidence. His indifference can hardly be otherwise accounted for, although his partial rectification of the judgment which gave Ziba all, seems an admission that some adjustment was needed. With Mephibosheth, as with himself, the servant gained a temporary ascendancy over the master, as the external sometimes does over the internal ; and when this is the case, the laws of order are not adhered to, since the natural man has desires and interests of his own, so that even in his service rendered to the Lord he has a view to the recompense of reward. But David did between Ziba and his master what is right in such a case, he united their interests and established a balance between them, by dividing between them the land, of which they became joint possessors. The master's self-denying exclamation, "Yea, let him take all," is the disclaiming of all merit ; the return of the king in peace to his own house, or the restoration of the peaceful rule of the Lord's truth in the mind, and eminently in the will, being the highest reward which the inner man desires.

One other of those who came to meet the king was Barzillai, the Gileadite, who was one of the three who had so liberally supplied the wants of David, and the people that followed him, at Mahanaim. As forming part of the Israelitish possessions, and thus a part of the Holy Land in an extended sense, but a boundary, as when the breadth of

the land is said to be from Gilead even to Dan (Deut. xxxiv. 1), Gilead signifies the first good, which is that of things pertaining to the bodily senses ; for it is into the good or the pleasurable enjoyment of these that man who is regenerated is first initiated. Yet, under another aspect, and in relation to a more advanced state of the regenerate life, as when it becomes the heritage of Ephraim (Zech. x. 10), it signifies the good of charity. Barzillai is here represented as having reached that higher state of life when the good or pleasurable enjoyment of the bodily senses has passed away, or rather, when it has passed into that higher good, which is the pleasurable enjoyment of mental things, to which the first corresponds and is designed to lead. When Barzillai came and passed over Jordan with the king, and David invited him to go with him to Jerusalem, where he would feed him, he said, "I am this day fourscore years old: and can I discern between good and evil? can thy servant taste what I eat or what I drink? can I hear any more the voice of singing men and singing women?" Here is a state described in which the means have accomplished their end, and are no more needed. The pleasurable enjoyment of the senses is one of the wise as well as beneficent provisions of the Creator. Men sometimes speak of them as hindrances to the reception and enjoyment of spiritual things. And no doubt when they become the sole or superior good of life they are. But considered in regard to the young, the pleasures of sense are the proper enjoyments of life. And the senses are the avenues through which they acquire their information as well as their pleasures. The senses of touch, of taste, of smell, of sound, of sight, how marvellously are they adapted to the outer world of matter in which we live, and to the inner world of mind, to which they minister! While the things of the world give us numberless sensuous pleasures, they supply us with numberless ideas. And yet those with which nature supplies us are but the food of the natural mind, which is designed to prepare us for a nobler and more satisfying means of life. Nothing can satisfy the immortal mind but that which is spiritual and eternal. When these have obtained their true place in our estimation, the world and the things of it, though they may have lost neither their charm nor their use, are no longer the chief good. A higher good, a more refined and enduring pleasure, has taken the place of the lower ; the means have given way to the end. When the spiritual and the eternal become ends, life is in its true order. Things temporal and eternal are harmonized. True religion is a reconciler of all created things, whether they be things of earth or things of heaven. The grand harmony is that which is established between the different faculties of the mind itself, the will and the understanding. This harmony was Barzillai's age, fourscore, like four, and four like two, being expressive of this

harmony and union. When all the powers of the mind are harmonized and united, that which constitutes true old age has arrived ; whether old in years, if one is old in state, such a one is old in the spiritual and Scripture sense of the word. Sense has become subordinate to mind. And this is second, that is spiritual, childhood. The innocence of ignorance has become the innocence of wisdom. Sense has done its good and useful work, and has yielded up its sway to the matured perceptive and affectional faculties of the mind.

Barzillai pleaded his many infirmities for asking permission, after he should have passed with the king over Jordan, to turn back, that he might die in his own city, and be buried in the grave of his father and of his mother. To die is spiritually to live again, and to be buried is to rise again : to die in his own city is to live the higher life of his own native doctrine, and to be buried in his parents' grave is to enter into the higher life of his hereditary faith and love, and to enter into consociation with kindred souls who are in the same degree of the heavenly life. However highly perfected one may be in the religious life, he can only enter into and enjoy that one of the three heavens which corresponds to the degree which has been opened in his own mind. The Lord desires, indeed, that all should rise into the highest state, and ascend into the highest heaven, and partake with him of the highest good and bliss, but happiness, even in heaven, can only be found in that one of the many mansions of our Father's house whose amplitude or smallness answers to our capacity of reception and enjoyment. Barzillai is a Gileadite, and a Gileadite he must live and die. But although he lives in the outer circle of the Holy Land, he has a warm heart and a liberal hand. He is happier in his own city and with his own humbler fare than he would be in Jerusalem and at the king's table. Yet, although he may not go up, Chimham may go. The son has not, like the father, closed his account with the world. He has not come into that singleness of heart and mind which no longer needs to discern and choose between good and evil. He can taste what he eats and drinks, he can hear the voice of singing men and women. His mental like his bodily senses are still active ; they have a clear perception of the good and the true, as the meat and drink of the soul, and of the harmony of the affections for them, which is the soul's concord of sweet sounds. He is still capable of increasing in knowledge and growing in wisdom. He will not be a burden to the king. The king kisses Barzillai and blesses him. With the kiss of love and the blessing of peace, he returns unto his own place, waiting patiently, as one whose state is full, until his change came. Chimham goes up with the king, and he becomes great, so that a habitation, or city, is called by his name (Jer. xli. 17). Those whose nature answers to Chimham's name, who have a "great desire" for higher, that is,

for heavenly things ; and who can say with the Psalmist, " O God, Thou art my God ; early will I seek Thee ; my soul thirsteth for Thee, my flesh longeth for Thee," will receive Chimham's reward, not only in finding a habitation in the heavenly Canaan, but in receiving the blessing bestowed by the king in his dying charge to Solomon on the sons of Barzillai : " Let them be of those that eat at thy table : for so they came to me when I fled because of Absalom thy brother " (1 Kings ii. 7).

CHAPTER XXII.

THE REVOLT OF ISRAEL UNDER SHEBA.

2 Samuel xx.

THE king was conducted from Gilgal by all the people of Judah and half the people of Israel, and all the men of Israel came to the king, and said, " Why have our brethren the men of Judah stolen thee away, and have brought the king, and his household, and all David's men with him, over Jordan ? " This gave rise to a contention between the tribes concerned, the men of Judah urging that the king was near of kin to them, and the men of Israel maintaining that they had ten parts in the king. This is the great contention between the members of the Lord's household, which was as early as Cain and Abel, and as late as the twelve apostles, whether goodness or truth, or charity and faith, is entitled to pre-eminence, and has more interest in the king and a better claim to his favour. In the present case, as in many others before and since, the difference was not settled. We only read that the words of the men of Judah were fiercer than the words of the men of Israel. If the men of the Church could only see that charity and faith are both excellent, and both necessary to the existence of true religion, they might agree to live and work harmoniously together. Love or charity is, indeed, nearer of kin to the king, when David is king, but truth or faith has ten parts in him, not only because the truths of faith are numerous, but because they are the ten words which, as the laws of justice and judgment, are the habitation of the throne of God.

The unsettled contention between these two divisions of the people resulted in a revolt. " There happened to be there a man of Belial, whose name was Sheba, the son of Bichri, a Benjamite : and he blew a trumpet, and said, We have no part in David, neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse : every man to his tents, O Israel. So every man of Israel went up from after David, and followed Sheba the son of Bichri : but the men of Judah clave unto their king, from Jordan even to Jerusalem." This contention among the tribes, like that

among the apostles, took place by the way, as the king went up from Gilgal, and the malcontents left the king to follow Sheba.

When the king came to Jerusalem, his first act was to shut up the ten women, his concubines, whom he had left to keep the house, and they lived in widowhood till the day of their death. These were the unfortunate women we read of in Absalom's rebellion. Now that they were defiled, though not by their own fault, and were as things profaned, they must be separated; since good profaned cannot be united to truth, which itself would be profaned by such an alliance.

David then commissioned Amasa to assemble the men of Judah within three days, which is, spiritually, to combine the principles of good according to the laws of truth. But Amasa failing to appear at the appointed time, the king commanded Abishai to take his lord's servants and pursue after Sheba, and there went after him Joab's men, and the Cherethites, and the Pelethites, and all the mighty men.

And here an event is recorded which we must pause to consider.

When they went forth and were at the great stone which is in Gibeon, Amasa went before them. And Joab, under the pretence of friendship, took Amasa by the beard with his right hand and kissed him, while with his left he thrust his sword into his body. Joab had killed Abner, the captain of Saul's army, who adhered to Ish-bosheth, and now he slays Amasa, who had led the army of Absalom, but only when they had been received into favour by David. Naturally considered, it was, of course, jealousy in one case and revenge in the other that led Joab to commit these crimes. But they were the crimes which finally rose up in judgment against him, and condemned him, although they were not the immediate cause of his death. He was accused by David of slaying deceitfully two men more righteous than himself, who had given him no just cause of offence. Of course we are to regard the subject in its spiritual sense. And if we see in Joab a type of that rationality which partakes more of the natural mind than of the spiritual, we may perceive the reason of Joab's conduct both to David and to those whom David favoured to the prejudice of Joab's interests and authority.

Amasa, like Joab, was a nephew of David's, being the son of his sister Abigail, as Joab was of his sister Zeruiah. In chapter ~~xxxv~~ 25, Amasa's father, Ithra, is said to have been an Israelite, but in 1 Chronicles ii. 17, he is called an Egyptian. How are we to account for this discrepancy? If one statement is wrong, it is more likely to be that in Samuel; for it is not usual to intimate that a man of Israel is an Israelite. But it seems possible that both statements may be true. Ithra may have been an Ishmaelite by descent and an Israelite by adoption. We find in the same chapter of Chronicles in which Ithra, or Jether, is called an Ishmaelite, the account of a man of Israel, who

had no son, giving his daughter, an heiress, to an Egyptian servant, who became, by marriage, a member of the commonwealth of Israel, and whose children and descendants were enrolled as belonging to the tribe of Judah. We cannot, perhaps, infer much from the name, which was borne by several pure Israelites, but the first instance in which it occurs is as the name of a foreigner, Jethro, the priest of Midian and father-in-law of Moses. Considering Ithra to have been a re-born Ishmaelite, his son must have inherited the nature of the wild-ass man of the desert, refined and elevated by the purer and nobler blood of Isaac. The younger of two sisters, also, has generally the higher signification, as Rachel the younger sister of Leah, and Mary the younger sister of Martha. So also their sons, as Joseph and Benjamin. The principle which Amasa represented was also more comprehensive than that of which Joab was the type. The two separate streams in which the blood of Abraham had flowed for centuries met and mingled in the blood of Amasa. He must therefore have represented the rational in a broader and even higher sense than as represented by Joab ; the rational, which is distinguished into internal, external, and middle, being capable both of particular and general advancement.

Amasa, who had supported the rebellion of Absalom, was appointed by David to suppress the insurrection of Sheba ; a characteristic of that faculty which can act either in separating or in uniting the spiritual mind and the natural, according as it sides with the one or the other. It can be converted from the negative to the affirmative side, and be as powerful in supporting a cause as it formerly was in opposing it, even when the cause is that of God and religion.

Amasa was sent to assemble the men of Judah within three days ; but he tarried longer than the set time ; and David, fearing that Sheba's insurrection might do him more harm than Absalom's rebellion, despatched Abishai with all the king's servants that were in Jerusalem in pursuit. Joab with his men followed. Meantime Amasa returned, and seems to have been sent to join Abishai. And when they were at the great stone which is in Gibeon, Amasa went before them. Joab, simulating friendship, went up to Amasa, and took him by the beard with his right hand to kiss him, while with the left he thrust his sword into his side and killed him. This may be regarded as an act of revenge, and, like the murder of Abner, was intended to remove a dangerous rival out of the way. But there is in other minds the spirit from which these acts proceeded. There is a conflict of spiritual as well as of natural interests. The Lord's own disciples contended among themselves which should be greatest in His kingdom. The contention among the disciples represented a contention which takes place in the mind of every disciple among the principles which the twelve represented. There is a contention whether, for

instance, charity, faith, or works shall be greatest, and shall rule over the others. Joab had hitherto been the greatest in the kingdom of David ; and he retained his ascendancy to the last ; for we find him, after the death of Amasa, at the head of the army again, even although the king evidently wished to supersede him. And so it is in our religious experience. We desire to place the truths by which we oppose our spiritual adversaries under a more perfect leadership ; so that there is a conflict within a conflict. While there is a conflict between motive and act, there may be a conflict between motive and motive ; a conflict between the spirit and the flesh, and a conflict at the same time within the spirit itself, which grieves that it is not right with God. Nor does this conflict end till the state of the religious life itself passes into one purer and higher. Some of David's aspirations are only realized in Solomon. It is well that these things are in the heart. The Lord will bring to pass all the desires of the faithful ; but the times and the seasons are in His hand.

One of Joab's evil qualities was duplicity. He was like those who attempt to serve God and Mammon. With Joab it was himself and the king. The slaying of his own rival first and the slaughter of the king's enemies next. With the dexter hand of simulated goodness he took Amasa by the beard to give him the kiss of brotherly love, while with the sinister hand of concealed self-interest he slew him with the sword of falsehood, for the truth is turned into falsehood by those who use it falsely. Yet Joab, though not commissioned to engage in suppressing the insurrection, seems to have taken the place of Amasa, and assumed the chief command. For one of Joab's men said, "He that favoureth Joab, and he that is for David, let him go after Joab." And "all the people went on after Joab, to pursue after Sheba the son of Bichri."

It is rather remarkable that after the defeat and death of Absalom, and indeed out of it, there should arise an attempt to divide, if not to overturn, the kingdom of David. But we need not be greatly surprised if we reflect that want of harmony between the understanding and the will is a condition of mind incident to all stages of the regenerate life till that work is completed ; for the establishment of harmony and union between these two faculties is the new birth itself. Conflict between will and understanding is also conflict between good and truth, and between charity and faith. Not that there is or can be any conflict between these two, as they are in themselves. True faith can never be opposed to true charity. It is only in the human mind that they can come into conflict ; for there only can one be made to condemn the other. The Christian moralist may condemn faith, and the Christian believer may condemn charity. The more common error is to claim supremacy or independence for faith. This claim was repre-

sented by the revolt of Sheba the son of Bichri, in which he was joined by the tribes of Israel, as opposed to the tribe of Judah, which adhered to David. This is a heresy which owes its origin to evil, or to the absence of goodness. This is expressly mentioned in the present case, for Sheba was a man of Belial. If the radical meaning of the word were applied to the heresy, it would exactly describe its nature ; for while a life of charity is a useful life, a life of faith without charity, or of truth without goodness, is a "useless" one, and a useless life is liable to become a wicked and sinful one, which the word, when applied to any one, generally signifies.

Pursued by Joab, Sheba took refuge in Abel, a city belonging to the tribe of Manasseh. There is nothing particular recorded of this city except in this instance ; and that is highly creditable to it. It had become proverbial for wisdom, so much so, that "they were wont to speak in old time, saying, They shall surely ask counsel at Abel : and so they ended the matter." When Joab came to Abel he cast up a bank against it, and all the people that were with Joab battered the wall, to throw it down. A peaceful city is converted into a theatre of war. A city is the emblem of doctrine. Manasseh, the eldest son of Joseph, represented the new will, as Ephraim, his younger son, represented the new understanding ; and the tribes descended from them had a similar meaning. But there is something connected with the formation of the new will that throws light upon the case we are now considering. "Manasseh signifies forgetfulness, thus, in the spiritual sense, removal, namely, the removal of evils, as well actual as hereditary ; for when these are removed the new will arises ; for the new will exists by the influx of good from the Lord. This influx is continual with man, but evils, actual and hereditary, hinder and oppose reception ; wherefore on their removal the new will comes into existence. That the new will is thus formed appears manifest with those who are in misfortune, misery, and disease ; for whereas on such occasions there is a removal of self-love and the love of the world, from which all evils flow, at such times a man thinks well of God and of his neighbour ; he is also in like manner well disposed in will towards his neighbour in temptations, which are spiritual griefs, and thus interior miseries and desperations. By these more especially the removal of evils is effected ; and after evils are removed celestial good from the Lord flows in, whence comes the new will in the natural mind, which in the representative sense is Manasseh."

We have here, then, an exemplification of this state. There are evil, misfortune, misery ; temptations, which are spiritual griefs, and desperations. The disturbing elements have been drawn from many of the tribes, from Manasseh as well as the others, and now they find shelter behind the walls of one of her cities. The name of this city is

not the same as that of Adam's second son, whom Cain slew. Abel signifies mourning. We find it in Abel-mizraim, which received its name from the great mourning at the floor of Atad, where Joseph and his company rested when he went up to bury his father in Canaan. The name was also given to the great stone on which the Israelites set down the ark of the Lord, when it was brought out of the country of the Philistines, to express, we may suppose, the lamentation of the people, because the Lord had smitten above fifty thousand of the men of Beth-shemesh for having looked into the ark (1 Sam. vi. 14-19). To distinguish the Abel of the present chapter from others, it is called Abel of Beth-maachah, the whole signifying the mourning of the house of oppression. The state and condition of the city were such as its name expressed. It was like a mind oppressed by the presence of evils, both active and hereditary, within, and pressed upon by the demands of truth and duty from without. The walls that surround and defend a city are like the truths of the literal sense of the Word that serve as the defence of doctrinal principles. As the outworks of a principle, they are the first to be assailed; and when they can no longer defend, the principle itself must give way. When resistance is continued, the consequence of being overcome is like that which attended the conquest of resisting cities, when all were put to the sword. When evil predominates in the mind, the result of determined opposition to the truth is, that good and evil perish together, they are involved in one common ruin. The state of the mind is not determined by the relative amount of good or evil it contains, as if one could be weighed in a balance against the other. The ruling principle determines the character of the mind, whatever its secondary and accidental qualities may be. Sheba and no doubt many of his followers had made or forced their way into the city of Abel, and may have found others there who favoured their cause. They seem to have formed a strong party, else the inhabitants would have gladly opened their gates to Joab. It is not unlikely that many of the men leaned to Sheba's side; but the city was saved by a wise woman. "Then cried a wise woman out of the city, Hear, hear; say, I pray you, unto Joab, Come near hither, that I may speak with thee." When she had obtained the ear of Joab, after reminding him of the proverbial wisdom of the people of Abel, she said, "I am one of them that are peaceable and faithful in Israel: thou seekest to destroy a city and a mother in Israel: why wilt thou swallow up the inheritance of the Lord?" When Joab had assured her it was far from his wish to swallow up or destroy, and that he would depart on their delivering up Sheba, the woman said unto Joab, "Behold, his head shall be thrown to thee over the wall. Then the woman went unto all the people in her wisdom. And they cut off the head of Sheba the son of Bichri, and cast it out to Joab. And he

blew a trumpet, and they retired from the city, every man to his tent. And Joab returned to Jerusalem unto the king."

The perceptive wisdom of women is more rapid in its operation and more certain in its conclusion than the reasoning intelligence of men. Their wisdom is the highest logic, although it is not syllogistic, which all right reasoning is said to be. It is the logic of good sense, because it is true thinking from right feeling. Such is the wisdom of every good woman; and such was the wise woman of Abel. Her wisdom was the truth of goodness. The decisions of that truth are Yea and Amen, from which there is no appeal, because none is felt to be necessary. Those who are in doubt, or with whom there is a difference between the will and the understanding, and who yet sincerely desire to have their doubts removed and their differences settled, need only to ask counsel at Abel, and the matter will be ended. "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted." "The just shall live by his faith." These are among the means by which the mind is quieted and its conflicting faculties are reconciled.

The wise woman had no hesitation in promising to Joab that the head of Sheba should be thrown to him over the wall. And when she went to the people in her wisdom she seems to have had no difficulty in persuading or convincing them of what was right for them to do. "Wisdom is justified of all her children." Beheading Sheba was cutting off the head of the insurrection. Principles may be thus destroyed as well as persons. Principles are as the head which rules, and on which the rest of the parts depend, and when the ruling element is separated from the dependent parts the whole falls to the ground. The head of Sheba, after being cut off, was thrown over the wall. It was like a principle that is cast out from the mind, and is thus rejected and repudiated. This in the case of Sheba satisfied Joab, who returned to Jerusalem unto the king.

Thus ended the rebellion; and the order which followed, as the result of peace, is expressed by the concluding statement respecting David's affairs, and his ministers, from Joab, who was over all the land of Israel, to Ira the Jairite, who was a chief ruler about David.

CHAPTER XXIII.

SEVEN MEN OF THE SONS OF SAUL GIVEN UP TO THE GIBEONITES.

2 Samuel xxi.

THERE is a painful interest in many portions of the Old Testament, where war and bloodshed enter so largely into the sacred history, and

where the Divine Being Himself is not unfrequently represented as seeking satisfaction in the death of His creatures. Yet these are the parts of Scripture that require our most careful attention. The appearance they present of cruelty or injustice, and of undue severity on the part of the Infinite, if left without satisfactory explanation, has a tendency to diminish our reverence both for the Scriptures and their Divine Author. But when we reflect that such difficulties not only admit of a satisfactory solution, but afford useful spiritual instruction, we have a double inducement for making them the subjects of reflection.

Under a religious dispensation in which the states of the Church were exhibited in their effects in outward nature, a famine that continued for three years, year after year, could not fail to excite in the mind of every pious Israelite a fear, if not a conviction, that some unknown and unacknowledged evil reigned amongst the people. Under such an impression David inquired of the Lord; and he received for answer, "It is for Saul, and for his bloody house, because he slew the Gibeonites." The tragic sequel, the death of seven of Saul's house, and the burial of their bones with those of Saul and Jonathan, are represented as having removed the cause of the famine; for "after that God was intreated for the land."

There are several reflections which this relation suggests.

In the first place, God did not make known by immediate revelation the consequences that must ensue if the crime of Saul were not followed by suitable atonement; but He allowed the famine to fall as a scourge upon the people, and to continue, till they themselves should search out the cause. Of this mode of dealing with His people there are many instances recorded in the Scriptures. And these are no doubt designed to instruct us in the nature of a part of the Divine economy of which we ourselves are the subjects.

The Lord has revealed His will and given us laws, for our instruction and direction in the life of righteousness. If we violate any of those laws, or do what we know to be contrary to the Divine will, the revealed Word assures us that we cannot be forgiven but by repentance and amendment. And if the evil is not removed, its consequences must of necessity fall upon us, that we may be led to self-examination before God, in order to trace the effect up to its cause, and seek His direction and aid for its removal. In many things also we can only be taught by experience. Not that there are any circumstances in which we are left without sufficient direction to walk in the right way. But such is the human will of fallen man, that it cannot be subdued without tasting of the bitter fruits of sinful indulgence. And as man is to be led in freedom, both to resist evil and to do good, he is left to

act freely ; and on this ground the Lord teaches him through his experience freely to forsake the path of sin, when he has neglected to obey the truth as revealed.

In the second place, the crime of Saul is not visited on him nor on Israel during his time, but on his descendants and on the people in the time of David. In the Israelitish Church, in which all things were representative, guilt is often punished on others than those by whom it is immediately committed. The iniquity of the fathers is visited upon the sons. In the Divine view Israel was considered to be one, and, spiritually, Israel represents one man. The men of Israel represented the principles of the mind of this one man, and the periods of the Israelitish history represented the stages of the regenerate life. The crimes that were punished on the descendants of those who committed them represented those evils that are not checked in their beginning or interrupted in their progress, but are allowed to run their course till they have reached a crisis, which ends either in death or restoration. An evil that exists in the will may not be seen or arrested there, but may branch out into the affections and thoughts, or even into the words and actions, before it be successfully opposed. And the affections and thoughts, in relation to the will and understanding, are as children in relation to parents ; and are represented by them in the Scriptures. The derivation of evil in the will into the affections, and of falsity in the understanding into the thoughts, is spiritually signified by the declaration in the decalogue, that the Lord visits the iniquities of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate Him. Three and four do not mean simply a series, but one number has relation to the understanding and its falsity, the other to the will and its evil. And these principles, when rooted in the will and understanding of the mind, branch out into the affections and thoughts. It is in this more ulterior form that they are, in many cases, first discovered, and that they are brought to judgment. This would appear to be the reason that, in the present instance, the descendants of Saul were punished for his sin, and that there is no previous record of the sin itself as committed by that king. The famine was for Saul, because he slew the Gibeonites. But this is the first time that that crime is mentioned. Nothing is said in the history of Saul of his having destroyed any of that people. So, in our experience, there are evils that are only brought to our remembrance and consciousness as sins long after they have been committed ; and evils may have had a deadly activity in the will that have only been truly seen and condemned when they have descended into the thoughts of the understanding.

The crime of Saul which was visited by famine upon the people and death on the seven men of his sons requires our attention. The

singular history of the introduction of the Gibeonites into the congregation is well known and must be familiar to every reader of the Bible. When Joshua entered as a conqueror into the Promised Land, this section of the Hivites, and here called a remnant of the Amorites, "did work wilily, and went and made as if they had been ambassadors, and took old sacks upon their asses, and wine-bottles, old, and rent, and bound up; and old shoes and clouted upon their feet, and old garments upon them; and all their provision was dry and mouldy. And they went to Joshua unto the camp of Gilgal, and said, We be come from a far country: now therefore make ye a league with us." So "Joshua made peace with them, and made a league with them to let them live; and the princes of the congregation sware unto them." When the fraud was discovered, although the oath could not be broken, Joshua said unto them, "Now therefore ye are cursed, and there shall none of you be freed from being bondmen, and hewers of wood and drawers of water for the house of my God." The oath with which the covenant was confirmed was thenceforward to be held inviolate. Saul was the first and the only one who broke that sacred engagement, although there is no record of when or how the engagement was broken. And an act which set at nought a solemn compact, and was visited by such serious consequences, must represent an evil of a very serious character.

Of the seven nations of Canaan devoted to utter destruction, two were partially received into connection with the Israelitish people—the Hivites by covenant, the Jebusites by sufferance. This partial exception was made in their case, because the Hivites represented idolatry in which there is something good, and the Jebusites idolatry in which there is something true. In relation to those who are being regenerated, whom these seven nations represented so far as regards all the corrupt principles which make up the life of the natural mind as it is hereditarily, the connection of the congregation of Israel with a remnant of two of these nations represented the preservation of every good natural affection and thought, or of every natural good and truth in the mind, and its conjunction with the spiritual good and truth acquired by actual regeneration. Everything is preserved and regenerated that is capable of being bent into conformity with any good end, and that can be made to render any real spiritual service, however lowly or limited. The external character of the good which the Hivites represented, and the external character of the service they were capable of rendering, was represented by their being made hewers of wood and drawers of water to the house of the Lord, this service indicating a cultivation of the knowledge of good and truth, not for their own sake, but as a matter of duty, as a labour, not of love but of service. Yet this service is useful and necessary, and when performed faithfully, is

to be received as a use rendered to the Lord and His kingdom ; and, like many of the lower uses of religion, forms a means by which the higher uses are preserved in their activity. To destroy these principles, therefore, would be to destroy the use which a beneficent Providence has appointed them to perform ; but to destroy them, as Saul sought to do, after a solemn covenant had been made with them, is to seek to dissolve their conjunction with the principles of the spiritual mind, and to deprive both of the mutual use and stability which conjunction secures.

This was the sin which brought a famine for three years upon the land, denoting the privation of the means of supporting the spiritual life, when such a violation of faith and integrity is attempted, though not fully carried into effect.

The death of seven of the men of the sons of Saul represented the removal of the evils and falsities derived from that original and ruling principle in which the crime originated. Although this remedy was demanded by the Gibeonites, it appears to have been approved, and even required, by the Lord Himself. But this does not teach us that the Lord punishes the sins of the fathers upon the children in a spiritual manner ; but only that order itself produces, and the Lord provides, the judgment of justice against evil, either in its beginning or in some of its derivations. Painful in a natural point of view as the present relation is to our feelings, it is no doubt intended to impress us with the conviction that the spiritual result of evil, of which it is the symbol, is still more harrowing to the spiritual affections. These natural sorrows have an end, and time itself exhausts them ; but those which are spiritual, if not corrective, endure for ever.

Connected with this historical circumstance there is a touching incident recorded in the conduct of Rizpah, the concubine of Saul, and mother of two of the sons who were put to death. She spread sackcloth upon the rock, from the beginning of harvest till water dropped upon them out of heaven, and suffered neither the birds of the air to rest upon them by day, nor the beasts of the field by night. In this we may recognise the unwearied watchfulness and extreme tenderness of womanly affection, especially when that affection is exalted into maternal love. Infamy cannot destroy it, misfortune greatly exalts it ; and when all others' hearts are cold or careless, there is one at least that remains warm and watchful by day and by night. In this beautiful instance of feminine and maternal love we see the symbol of inward spiritual affection in its desire and its care to preserve the principles of the Church from being destroyed by falsities and evils. For both Saul and his sons represented the principles of the Church, although in their states of opposition to the Lord's cause they represented those principles perverted. Such is the representation of the men of

the sons of Saul in the present instance. The principles of the Church are perverted when our own evil life, or our own evil ends, enter into them and rule them. When, as in the case of Saul's sons, the evil life is destroyed or removed, the principles themselves are holy, and become filled with a new and higher life. As holy things, they are to be preserved by the watchfulness of the spiritual affections from the devouring tendency of the natural lusts and passions, which, like birds and beasts of prey, are ever ready to consume whatever is good and true in the mind. The watching of Rizpah is said to have been continued from harvest till water dropped upon them out of heaven. Harvest in the Word signifies the completion of a state, the time of consummation and decision, when there is an end and a separation; the harvest being gathered in, the wheat is stored up in the garner, the tares are burned in the fire. But when, after the labours and the drought of harvest, the rain drops out of heaven, when truth descends from the heaven of the inner man, and falls, like a refreshing shower or the gentle dew, upon the outer man, a new state begins, and the days of mourning are ended—the sackcloth spread upon the rock ceases to be the couch of the holy watcher. The pious care of Rizpah is told unto David, and David completes the object of her care and solicitude by gathering the bones of the seven men, with those of Saul and Jonathan, and burying them in the sepulchre of Kish. After that God is intreated for the land. In Scripture burial signifies resurrection; for while men bury the body, angels welcome the spirit into the eternal world. In the view of angels death and burial have nothing sad or destructive in them. They see only the immortal soul entering into a new and higher life; and in the spiritual, which is the angelic, sense of the Divine Word, life and immortality take the place that death and burial occupy in the letter. The burial of the bones of Saul and his sons by David represented the rising into higher and purer life of the Divine truths of the Church, after being purified from the perversion to which they had been subjected. This is effected by the Lord, of whom David was an eminent type. They were buried in the land of Benjamin, in the sepulchre of Kish, the father of Saul; for the land of Benjamin is the intellectual mind, and the sepulchre of Saul's father, Kish, is the life of love or goodness.

When we view the subject in the light of the spiritual sense we can see our way to a satisfactory solution of the difficulties presented in the simple historical sense, and at the same time draw from it instruction for our guidance in the life of righteousness.

When the evils that obstruct the operation of the Divine mercy and truth are removed from our souls, the sunshine of heaven falls with its blessed influence upon them, and serenity and joy are restored. Our souls become barren when they are turned away from the Lord;

but when we turn to Him with the whole heart, and enter into new life, God is intreated for us—He is favourable ; and in His favour is life. Of course we do not mean that any change takes place in the Divine mind. Such is presented in the appearances of the letter. The spiritual sense teaches us that the change is in man. The Divine Being is ever favourable, ever kind, but His favour and kindness are turned away by the sins of His creatures, and flow in abundance into the human heart when men are willing and obedient.

When we find ourselves without the inward consolation and outward fruitfulness of the heavenly life, we should examine ourselves to discover the cause. And having made the discovery, we should put away the evil of our doings from before the eyes of the Lord, and the light of the Divine countenance will shed joy over our inward life and render our outward life fruitful in all good works.

CHAPTER XXIV.

DAVID'S SONG OF THANKSGIVING.

2 *Samuel* xxii.

AFTER the life of tribulation and conflict which David had passed through, with its perils and deliverances, it is only what might be expected from the piety of his character that he should pour out his soul to God in a song of thanksgiving. We have had occasion to notice some of these beautiful compositions, in which he expresses his trust in the Lord in times of trial, and His gratitude to Him for deliverance from trouble. This song is more general in its character than any of the others ; and is one of the noblest and sweetest of the numerous effusions of his pious spirit, influenced as it was by the Spirit of the Lord.

This song bears some resemblance to that which Moses sang after the deliverance from Egypt ; and we may preface the explanation by what our great commentator has said on the subject of sacred songs in treating of that which was sung by that other representative man on the borders of the Red Sea. "To sing a song signifies to glorify ; and thus a song signifies glorification. In the ancient Church, and afterwards in the Jewish, songs were prophetic, and treated of the Lord, especially of His coming into the world, and destroying the diabolical crew, and delivering the faithful from their assaults. And as the prophetics of songs contained such things in the internal sense, they hence signified the glorification of the Lord, that is, the celebration of Him from gladness of heart ; for gladness of heart is especially

expressed by a song, since in a song gladness breaks forth as it were spontaneously into sound. Hence it is that Jehovah, that is, the Lord, in song is called a Hero, a Man of War, the God of Armies, the Conqueror, Strength, a Defence, a Shield, Salvation. And the diabolical crew which was destroyed is called the enemy which was smitten, swallowed up, overwhelmed, cast into hell. Those who knew nothing of the internal sense formerly believed that such worldly things were meant as worldly enemies, combats, victories, overthrows, and overwhelmings, of which the songs in the external sense treat. But those who knew that those prophetics involved heavenly and Divine things, and that the heavenly and Divine were represented in the worldly, knew that these prophetics treated of the condemnation of the unbelieving, and the salvation of the believing, by the Lord when He should come into the world. And those who knew this to be the case, and reflected on it, and were influenced by it, were affected with internal gladness; but the former only with external gladness. The angels also who were attendant on man were at the same time, on such occasions, in the glorification of the Lord. Hence those who sang and those who heard the songs experienced heavenly gladness from the holy and blessed principles which flowed in from heaven, in which gladness they seemed to themselves as if taken up into heaven. Such an effect had the songs of the Church among the ancients. Such an effect might they have also at this day; for the spiritual angels are especially affected by songs that relate to the Lord, to His kingdom, and to the Church. That the songs of the Church had such an effect was not only in consequence of their giving activity to gladness of heart, and its breaking forth from the interior even to the extreme fibres of the body, and exciting them with a glad and at the same-time a holy tremor, but also because the glorification of the Lord in the heavens is effected by numerous choirs singing in concert. Hence also angelic speech is harmonious, falling into numbers. Hence the glorification of the Lord among the ancients who belonged to the Church was performed by songs, and psalms, and musical instruments of various kinds; for the ancients who belonged to the Church derived surpassing joy from the recollection of the Lord's coming, and of the salvation of the human race by Him."

With a few slight differences this song is the same as the eighteenth Psalm. It might have been sufficient to refer the reader to Clowes and Hiller on the Psalms, where the explanatory passages scattered throughout the Writings are brought together. But as David's spirit was refreshed after his many and severe trials by raising his thoughts and affections to God, so may the reader who has followed with us the course of David's history, and has seen so much of war and bloodshed, feel his spirit tranquillized by joining David in his pious aspirations.

In his fragmentary notes known as "*Adversaria*," our author, after leaving twenty chapters of the Second Book of Samuel unnoticed, enters into a minute explanation of David's song ; minute, we mean, not in explaining every word, but in taking every verse, and saying something in the way of explanation upon it. The explanation itself is, to use the artist's phrase, rather a study than a finished work. Yet as the studies of the great masters are highly prized, as enabling us to trace the development of their ideas, this study of our great Master Expositor may be interesting and not a little instructive. We therefore offer a translation of this sacred song. In some instances the explanation is supplemented by remarks, or by extracts from the author's published works, which are distinguished from the words of the "*Adversaria*" by a dash. Some few of the renderings may be considered partly as conjectural readings, the original being elliptical even to obscurity, and one is omitted as being founded on an accidental misreading of, we suppose, Schmidius' Latin version of the Hebrew.

(1.) The song of David when he was delivered out of the hand of his enemies.

That David uttered this word inspired by the Spirit of God-Messiah is clear : thus the Spirit speaks, not David, as also appears from chap. xxiii. 2. And because the Spirit speaks, it is not David who is understood, but in the more internal sense the faithful, and in the inmost sense those who trust and love God-Messiah, and in the supreme sense God-Messiah Himself. Such is the intention of the Holy Spirit wherever He speaks through David. Of this any one may be assured, particularly from vers. 21-27, where he treats of justice, cleanness of hands, integrity, holiness ; although he says elsewhere that in himself no one is pure, but altogether profane and unjust.

"The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer ; the God of my rock ; in Him will I trust : He is my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my high tower, and my refuge, my Saviour ; Thou savest me from violence" (vers. 2, 3). These are names which all signify God-Messiah, for He is everywhere called a mountain, and stone, and rock, and bulwark—for He alone fights—as well as holy, and the horn of salvation.—The Lord is a rock, as the omnipotent ; a fortress, a high tower, a shield, as a protector ; a horn of salvation, a Saviour, as He who saves from the violence of Satan and sin.

"I will call on the Lord, who is worthy to be praised : so shall I be saved from mine enemies" (ver. 4). Spiritual enemies are understood ; the Spirit means no other.

"When the waves of death compassed me, the floods of ungodly men made me afraid ; the sorrows of hell compassed me about ; the snares of death prevented me" (vers. 5, 6). The horde of the devil,

who is the enemy, is likened to the waves of death and the floods of Belial (ungodly men), because they are spirits, who in like manner rush in in troops. Hence come temptations, for they rush in in an inexpressible manner, by persuading, reviling ; hence they are called the sorrows of hell and the snares of death ; continually they persuade him whom they assault, craftily, most cunningly, nay, they are suffered in temptations to affect man, but they are snares or cords of death.

“In my distress I called upon the Lord, and cried to my God : and He did hear my voice out of His temple, and my cry did enter into His ears” (ver. 7). Spiritual distress is here described. But in God-Messiah is the only refuge ; out of His temple, that is, out of heaven, through the angels, comes a supplication (or cry), which, the more intense it is, is the more compared to a cry, for a cry is an effect, as is known, in accordance with the degree of intensity of the spirit.

“Then the earth shook and trembled ; the foundations of heaven moved and shook, because He was wroth” (ver. 8). Here is described vengeance upon the enemies, which is not inflicted by God-Messiah, although it is ascribed to Him, but is given to others, who rush in. Anger is described, that it will descend in order to the ultimate. Thus all that is above is moved, as is the case in man whilst the mind is in anger ; whatever is below, too, and the ultimates in the body, are moved ; there they act together. Here it is said, the earth trembled, the foundations of the heavens shook and were moved. Evil spirits are in the lowest parts, namely, in the place where the body is, and the natural mind respectively to the higher mind ; wherefore they tremble.

“There went up a smoke out of His nostrils, and fire out of His mouth devoured : coals were kindled by it” (ver. 9). Anger is likened to smoke, and fire, thus to live coals, as in mount Sinai and elsewhere. —It is not meant that smoke and devouring fire come out from the Lord, because He has no anger ; but it is so said, because the Lord appears such to those who are in the falsity of evil. Smoke denotes falsity, and the flame of it anger ; for the falsity of evil in the intellect is as smoke, and anger is the flame of kindled smoke.

“He bowed the heavens also, and came down ; and darkness was under His feet” (ver. 10). In like manner darkness, for it is as a very dark cloud, because it is then night to the evil.—Jehovah bowing the heavens and coming down signifies the visitation which precedes the last judgment ; darkness under His feet signifies falsities of evil in lower things ; by this is effected an exploration of the quality of spirits, and also a separation of the good from the evil. The Lord also bowed the heavens and came down at the time of the Incarnation when the heavens co-operated with Him, and darkness was under His

feet, when He assumed our fallen humanity. Darkness also is the literal sense of the Word.

"And He rode upon a cherub, and did fly : and He was seen upon the wings of the wind" (ver. 11). Upon a cherub ; because cherubs are those who descend, and who execute commands. On the wings of the wind is the same, for angels are called wings of the wind.—The Lord's riding upon a cherub signifies His Divine Providence, and His flying signifies His Omnipresence in the spiritual world, and His being seen upon the wings of the wind signifies His Omnipresence in the natural world.

"And He made darkness pavilions round about Him, dark waters, and thick clouds of the skies" (ver. 12). Darkness is as pavilions round about Him. Also binding of waters, and clouds, which amounts to the same, but with some difference of meaning.—This treats of the coming and presence of the Lord in the Word. Darkness and clouds are the literal sense. Still Divine truth such as it is in heaven is within the literal sense, therefore darkness is called a pavilion round about Him.

"Through the brightness before Him were coals of fire kindled" (ver. 13). There is brightness, which is the truth ; thence coals are kindled ; for [the spirits] chastise by means of the truth.—The darkness mentioned in the previous verse meaning the literal sense of the Word, the brightness here is the spiritual sense. In relation to the righteous, the darkness of the letter comes before the brightness of the spirit ; and they know the Lord after the flesh before they know Him according to the spirit. The affections are kindled by the fire of the Lord's love.

"The Lord thundered from heaven, and the Most High uttered His voice" (ver. 14). He thundered out of heaven. Thunders are thus the effects of anger ; they follow in the clouds ; thence [He] is called the Thunderer, from terror.—In respect to the Lord Himself His thunder is His Divine love and His lightning is His Divine truth, which affect the good and the evil in opposite ways, as explained in the next verse.

"And He sent out arrows, and scattered them ; lightning, and discomfited them" (ver. 15). These are spiritual weapons, namely, truths and goodnesses ; they are weapons of torment because they wounded the innocent one. Lightning is that light which thus comes, by which they are confounded.—Thunders are here expressed by thundering out of heaven and by giving forth a voice, and lightnings by arrows ; and both these signify Divine truths, and the flash their light ; which truths, as they vivify and enlighten the good, terrify and blind the evil, which is understood by sending forth arrows and scattering them, and lightning and discomfiting them, for the wicked cannot endure Divine

truths or any light from heaven, wherefore at their presence they flee away.

"And the channels of the sea appeared, the foundations of the world were discovered, at the rebuking of the Lord, at the blast of the breath of His nostrils" (ver. 16). That these will strike to the lowest hell, thus to the ultimate, is here described, the channels of the sea and the foundations of the earth being the lowest hell; for of hell there are degrees, on account of the rebuking, namely, the voice, or what that here signifies, the lightning, the thunder, of the truth. From the blast of the breath of His nostrils, the blast of the breath of the nostrils is life, which penetrates thus with that glow to the lowest parts.

"He sent from above, He took me; He drew me out of many waters" (ver. 17). Here is described, that man, nay, spirits are drawn forth out of hell, and this by God-Messiah, who draws man out from the damnation of many sins, that is, from many waters; He took him out of the deep, because from hell; man is rescued from the enemy, or the devil, who is too strong for him, thus from them that hate him, for the impious horde regard with deadly hatred the sons of God-Messiah, who are here represented by David.

"They prevented me in the day of my calamity; but the Lord was my stay" (ver. 19). They prevented me in the day of my calamity, namely, they desired to destroy me, but God-Messiah was my stay, as above, vers. 2, 3.—The day of calamity is a weak state as to the faith of truth; the Lord being a stay signifies ability in such case.

"He brought me forth also into a large place: He delivered me, because He delighted in me" (ver. 20). He brought me forth into a large [broad] place, into a heavenly plain, from the pit, from hell, because He delighted in me, that is, God-Messiah delighted in His sons. Here those things which are God-Messiah's are applied to those things in heaven and earth which are in God-Messiah. These [expressions] can in no wise be applicable to David, according to his own confession and various acts of his life, for he was exceedingly unrighteous. Because now those things which are in God-Messiah are applied or imputed, these words treat concerning Him alone, namely, that Jehovah delights in His Son alone, as was said in the mount, when He was glorified: these in like manner; for God-Messiah alone is Righteousness and clean.

"For I have kept the ways of the Lord, and have not wickedly departed from my God" (ver. 22). He alone kept the ways of Jehovah, that is, the Law in its complex; for He fulfilled all the law, internal and external, as well as all that the law involves, namely, what is involved by the sacrifices, and worship, etc. etc.: thus He alone

became Righteousness, and yet He prayed for those that hated Him, which David was never wont to do.

"For all His judgments were before me : and as for His statutes, I did not depart from them" (ver. 23). This is now confirmed by these words.—Judgments are Divine truths, according to which men ought to live. Statutes are the external things of the Word, such as rituals ; and those things which are representative and significative of the internal sense are the laws of worship.

"I was also upright before Him, and have kept myself from mine iniquity" (ver. 24). In like manner, [as in the previous verse.] Mine iniquity is man's iniquity, but it reads, "he took care that he should not act wickedly," as the other translator renders it. In Him was no iniquity.

"Therefore the Lord hath recompensed me according to my righteousness ; according to my cleanness in His eyesight" (ver. 25). These words in like manner as before, but with a difference.—By fulfilling the whole law in all its degrees the Lord became Righteousness itself ; and He alone had merit in His righteousness, because He fulfilled the law by His own power, whereas all the power which men have of doing good is derived from the Lord alone, and to Him all the merit of human righteousness is due.

"With the merciful Thou wilt show Thyself merciful, and with the upright man Thou wilt show Thyself upright" (ver. 26). That imputation of righteousness or holiness is understood, is manifest from these words, namely, with the holy Thou art holy, with the perfect Thou art perfect. Only God-Messiah is holy and perfect.

"With the pure Thou wilt show Thyself pure ; and with the froward Thou wilt show Thyself unsavoury" (ver. 27). With the pure, pure, in like manner. That righteousness may be imputed there must be a conflict, wherefore it is said, With the perverse Thou contendest.—This and the previous verse teach a most important truth. The Lord appears to every one according to his state. Mercy itself and purity itself, the perfect One appears to imperfect men, and especially to evil spirits, as He is reflected in their own states of heart and mind. For however men may think of the Lord doctrinally, they necessarily think of Him practically from their own states.

"And the afflicted people Thou wilt save : but Thine eyes are upon the haughty, that Thou mayest bring them down" (ver. 28). Thus, Thou savest the afflicted, namely, in the conflicts. But the haughty Thou castest down ; the lowly only He raiseth up : thus the lofty one is opposed to the afflicted, or the lowly, who lies in the dust.

"For Thou art my lamp, O Lord : and the Lord will lighten my darkness" (ver. 29). Thus He enlightens the understanding, for the understanding is never enlightened but after a conflict ; thus is dis-

persed the darkness, or the falsities. But the darkness clings to the mind because cupidities and guilt do so ; these continually induce falsities, which God dispels.

"For by Thee I have run through a troop : by my God have I leaped over a wall" (ver. 30). Thus he shall conquer, which is to run through a troop, and he will go over a wall, which they attack, as above, for within or without amounts to the same : for the impious think they stand in their fortified city.

"As for God, His way is perfect ; the word of the Lord is tried : He is a buckler to all them that trust in Him" (ver. 31). After man has been justified, this now follows, for God-Messiah then defends man and spirit, wherefore it is here now said, "as for God," that is, God-Messiah. He is called the way, integrity, the tried word of Jehovah, which clearly signifies God-Messiah, who is the Word of Jehovah, and tried, as is well known. A buckler to all who have faith, that is, who trust in Him.

"For who is God, save the Lord ? and who is a rock, save our God ?" (ver. 32.) That Jehovah alone is God : thus God-Messiah, in whom is the fulness of the Godhead ; for through Him, that is, by Him, all things are made, who alone is a rock, as above.

"God is my strength and power : and He maketh my way perfect" (ver. 33). In like manner a refuge, and power, as above. He will make man's way perfect, will lead man in the way of truth, which is the perfect way, which He will prepare.

"He maketh my feet like hinds' feet : and setteth me upon my high places" (ver. 34). Swiftness is here treated of, that He will speedily prepare the way. Feet are the way in which they walk. Upon my high places, namely, upon the sphere in me, which is above the rational mind, which is the high place in man, when it gives him understanding of the true and the good.

"He teacheth my hands to war ; so that a bow of steel [brass] is broken by mine arms" (ver. 35). He teacheth to war, how he shall smite his enemies, or overcome them. He submitteth the brazen bow to my arms, that is, gives me to understand the natural truths which are the brazen bow. Arms are the powers of understanding ; these are the strength of a man, and are called arms.

"Thou hast also given me the shield of Thy salvation : and Thy gentleness hath made me great" (ver. 36). The shield of salvation is saving faith. Thy afflicting makes me great, namely, affliction makes those who have faith great—thus to afflict is also said of the Messiah, that He makes man great.

"Thou hast enlarged my steps under me ; so that my feet [ankles] did not slip" (ver. 37).—To enlarge, literally, to make broad, the steps is to bring the life, meant by the feet, into conformity with the truth,

which is meant by breadth. The ankles, like the feet, correspond to the natural and sensual part of the mind ; hence the ankles not slipping signifies that the natural mind is supported.

"I have pursued mine enemies, and destroyed them : and turned not again until I had consumed them. And I have consumed them, and wounded them, that they could not arise : yea, they are fallen under my feet" (vers. 38, 39). These things follow when man has acquired faith ; then he pursues his enemies until he has consumed them.—The Lord pursued His enemies when, in His conflicts with the powers of darkness, He continued to resist and fight against them until they were overcome. The powers of darkness are in the continual effort to rise up and acquire dominion over heaven, yea, over the Lord Himself ; but the Lord so completely subdued them under His power that His foes were made His footstool. In relation to man the Lord's foes are the thoughts and affections of the natural mind, which are in the continual endeavour to rise against the thoughts and affections of the spiritual mind, until the Lord has brought them into subordination to the power of His Divine truth and goodness.

"For Thou hast girded me with strength to battle : them that rose up against me hast Thou subdued under me. Thou hast also given me the necks of mine enemies, that I might destroy them that hate me" (vers. 40, 41). The like, for strength here is faith, with which he is girded, and with which he lays low, *i.e.* subdues his spiritual enemies.

"They looked, but there was none to save ; even unto the Lord, but He answered them not. Then did I beat them as small as the dust of the earth, I did stamp them as the mire of the street, and did spread them abroad" (vers. 42, 43). How his enemies are treated of, how they are subdued, namely, that none shall save them, that they shall be as the dust, which is trodden as the mire, etc.—It may seem singular that the enemies of the Messiah or of man should cry unto the Lord for help ; but we find in the Gospel evil spirits both acknowledging the Lord's power and praying Him to grant them what they knew He only was able to give them. When about to be cast out of one possessed, the spirits prayed Jesus that He would not send them forth into the deep.

"Thou also hast delivered me from the strivings of my people, Thou hast kept me to be head of the heathen : a people which I knew not shall serve me" (ver. 44). Because it is faith that effects all this, here those things are set forth in which there is no faith, but there is doubt. Thus He shall deliver me from the strivings of my people, from the doubts which bring forth strivings and heresies. "Thou shalt keep me to be head of the heathen." Thus it is faith which he will keep ; in the inner, the inmost, and the supreme sense the head of

the heathen is God-Messiah. The people whom he knew not, is all that which confirms faith, which are things intellectual, etc., these shall serve and consent.

“Strangers shall submit themselves unto me : as soon as they hear, they shall be obedient unto me” (ver. 45). These words in like manner, for they are called sons of the stranger which shall fawn upon me, for they consent and obey ; for those things are servile, in comparison with faith.

“Strangers shall fade away, and they shall be afraid out of their close places” (ver. 46). Here are other sons of the stranger, namely those who possess truths without applying them ; they guard their treasures without enjoying them ; these shall quake, for from them they shall see spiritual celestial truths : this now is “out of their close places,” where they guard those things.

“The Lord liveth ; and blessed be my rock ; and exalted be the God of the rock of my salvation” (ver. 47). Now again he calls upon God-Messiah, as in the beginning so in the end, because of the first and the last, as is usual in Divine songs, just as in our Lord’s Prayer. “The Lord liveth” is a solemn expression, implying that Jehovah-God alone is Life. God-Messiah alone is a Rock, as above. And God is the rock of salvation, *i.e.* of faith. He is the rock of salvation.

“It is God that avengeth me, and that bringeth down the people under me” (ver. 48). He alone it is who defends man from injuries, and punishes the evil, [whom He prostrates,] for He alone it is who does this ; faith indeed [effects this,] but He alone gives faith.

“And that bringeth me forth from mine enemies : Thou also hast lifted me up on high above them that rose up against me : Thou hast delivered me from the violent man” (ver. 49). The things which were stated in the beginning are here taken up again, as is customary in songs. At length the deliverance is set forth. The enemies are, as above, the devil’s horde. The man of violence is the devil.

“Therefore I will give thanks unto Thee, O Lord, among the heathen, and I will sing praises unto Thy name” (ver. 50). Hence now confession or thanksgiving. That it shall be among the heathen, signifies various things, which see elsewhere ; for Thy name shall be sung among the heathen, those who confess.

“He is the tower of salvation for His king : and showeth mercy to His anointed, unto David, and to his seed for evermore” (ver. 51). Who magnifies the salvation of His King ; namely, Jehovah the Father, who praises His King’s, *i.e.*, His Son’s, righteousness and merits. And showeth mercy to His anointed, unto David, *i.e.* unto God-Messiah, for when He suffered He cried out concerning the mercy of Jehovah the Father, that He had forsaken Him. The Son Himself is the Anointed of Jehovah ; and is King David. And His seed is all who

have faith in Him. Furthermore, by king, anointed, and David are understood those who are called the sons of the King, thus kings. Seed is applied to them, when God-Messiah is understood by David. But seed is applied to faith and to those things which belong to faith, when the King's sons [are meant] by David; but when [seed] is applied proximately to David, it is those who will reign after him. These [will endure] for an age, *i.e.* for a time, as is manifest from the signification of an age wherever it occurs. But in the inner sense [and] the inmost, an age signifies eternity, as also elsewhere. That the kingdom will be everlasting, of David, see above, 2* Sam. vii. 13, 16, where those words also are explained.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE LAST WORDS OF DAVID.

2 Samuel xxiii. 1-6.

THE last words of David are evidently prophetic. The language bears a striking resemblance to that of Balaam, when he took up his parable, and blessed the children of Israel, whom Balak had brought him to curse. "And he took up his parable, and said, Balaam the son of Beor hath said, and the man whose eyes are open hath said: he hath said, which heard the words of God, and knew the knowledge of the Most High, which saw the vision of the Almighty, falling into a trance, but having his eyes open: I shall see him, but not now: I shall behold him, but not nigh: there shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Sheth. And Edom shall be a possession, Seir also shall be a possession for his enemies; and Israel shall do valiantly. Out of Jacob shall come he that shall have dominion, and shall destroy him that remaineth of the city." The similarity of the language shows that both spoke under an immediate inspiration from the Most High; and this alone is sufficient to convince us that the words of the Psalmist are prophetic as well as those of the Soothsayer. This is indeed obvious from the subject of David's utterance, as well as from his declaration, that the Spirit of the Lord spake by him. There is one part of his parable which might be understood in reference to himself, where he says, or rather where the Spirit says, "He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God;" but what follows cannot certainly be considered as applicable to any merely human being. It evidently refers to the Lord, who was about to come into the world; nor is this in any degree inconsistent with those facts which appear to

relate to David and his house ; for David himself was a representative of the Lord, as was also Solomon, and every other king of Israel and Judah.

Seeing then that David is here speaking from the Spirit of God concerning the glory of the Messiah and of His kingdom, we proceed to consider the import of his inspired enunciations.

To take this prophecy under its most general view, it declares the two universal objects and effects of the Lord's advent, the establishment of a covenant with the faithful, or the bringing of them into a more intimate connection with Himself, and the subjugation and removal of those who had overturned His kingdom in the world.

The Church is meant by the house of David ; for the Church is the Lord's house ; and the everlasting covenant to be established with it has reference to the conjunction which the Lord's Incarnation was to effect between Himself and His people. By the sons of Belial are to be understood especially the powers of darkness ; therefore not wicked men only but evil spirits, by whose influence and machinations the Church of the Lord had been perverted and destroyed. The subjugation of the powers of hell is described by the sons of Belial being thrust away as thorns, and utterly burned with fire. And that this could not be effected by the Lord in His pure unclothed Divinity, but required human nature as a covering and an instrument, is indicated in what is said of the sons of Belial, that they cannot be taken with hands, but that the man that shall touch them must be fenced with iron and the staff of a spear. The humanity of the Lord was a medium of communication between Himself and His children, and an instrumental power by which He opposed the enemies of His Church and kingdom. The Lord was the Word made flesh—clothed with humanity ; the Divine truth of which is meant by the iron, and the Divine goodness by the staff of a spear, in accordance with which another part of Scripture speaks of the Lord ruling the nations with a rod of iron, because iron signifies natural truth.

Besides, but in harmony with, this universal sense of the prophecy, there is a particular meaning, which lies concealed in every portion of it. In the 4th verse it is said, " He shall be as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds ; as the tender grass springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain."

In their general sense these Divine words relate to the Lord at His coming into the world, when, as the Sun of Righteousness, He arose on a benighted world with healing in His wings, and removed the cloud that had rested for ages upon the tabernacle and concealed its inner glories, and rent the veil of types and shadows, and shed the light of truth immediately from Himself ; and thus commenced the new day of spiritual enlightenment and of true and living faith. But in

the particular sense, they relate to the coming of the Lord, by His Spirit and His Word, to the minds of the penitent, when His light and love are shed abroad in their hearts, when the darkness of ignorance and error is removed, when a new day of truth and goodness dawns on the mind; and the signs of a new life, as the tender grass, are beginning to appear.

These are blessings set before us under the figure of the morning without clouds. But they are to be considered as the results of the spiritual dominion and government of the Lord, which are spoken of in the previous verse, where it is said, "He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God." The Lord, as the Ruler of men, is indeed infinitely just in Himself; but He rules His people in justice, when His justice rules in them as well as over them. For the Lord's government is different in different minds; some He governs by justice, some by judgment, or some by love, and some by fear, some by goodness, some by truth. The Divine government in its origin is the same, it is the government of infinite love by infinite wisdom; but its aspect is changed according to the different and varying states of men. When the Lord is spoken of as ruling in justice, the government of His Divine goodness is especially meant, and it is intended to describe the nature and quality of His dominion in the hearts of men. When the Divine goodness rules, it rules in the fear of God, not the slavish fear of God as an avenger, but the holy fear which is in all true love, a fear to injure and offend the object loved.

It is such love and fear of the just God that makes His coming to the mind as the light of the morning, when the sun ariseth, even a morning without clouds.

The morning is an emblem of peace and serenity of mind, when Divine truth sheds its mild light in the mind, and gives it a sense of that heavenly beauty and harmony which the light of Divine truth discloses. Morning, in Scripture, is peculiarly emblematical of an interior state of spiritual peace—a peace which arises not so much from the absence of outward troubles, as from the tranquillized state of inward feelings. Regeneration begins in tranquillity—like the dawn of day and the infancy of life. It is neither effected at once, nor does it advance in one continued series. It consists of a succession of distinct as well as of continuous states; and each particular state is an image of the whole. The life of the soul progresses in a way correspondently with that of the body. It has its birth, and its alternations of activity and rest, of wakefulness and repose. States also, like times, are formed and measured by particular revolutions. Every state has its morning, its noon, its evening, and its night. And it is by these grateful and beneficent vicissitudes that the powers of the mind are at once refreshed and invigorated, delighted and improved. States and their progressions are likewise produced from a cause analogous

to that which produces periods and progressions of time. It is the sun, indeed, which produces the day, and distinguishes the day from the night ; and it is the difference of the sun's altitude which makes the times of the day. But it is the revolution of the earth which causes all these changes, the sun shining in perpetual splendour, and making, so far as depends on him, perpetual day. It is the same with the Lord and His moral creation. In God there is no change, no variableness, neither shadow of turning : He is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever : His Sun shines with unchanging and impartial light on all the children of men. The absence of that light cannot be produced from its source, any more than darkness can be produced by the sun ; it arises solely from its subjects averting themselves from it, and excluding its influence from their hearts and understandings. Moral or spiritual darkness is caused entirely by self coming between the soul and God—by the selfhood of man standing between the Lord and the faculties which He has given for the perception and reception of His light and life. And as spiritual darkness is caused by the interposition of man's corrupt selfhood, agreeably to the declaration of Scripture, "Your sins have separated between you and your God, and your iniquities have hid His face from you ;" so every degree of obscurity arises from the activity of the human selfhood. However highly regenerated man may be, his selfhood can never be entirely neutralized, much less abolished. Even the heavens are not clean in the Lord's sight ; for as the man is in the angel, the angel is not free from the imperfections of the man.

If, then, the selfhood of man is the ground and cause of all spiritual darkness and obscurity, the degree of obscurity will be such as is the degree of its activity. When it is in its greatest activity it is night, when in its least activity it is morning ; and as it increases in activity, the day advances towards evening and night again. With the regenerate, as with the angels, there is never real darkness ; for although they experience a state that may be called night, it is such night as that in which, though the sun is absent, its light remains ; and that twilight is but an agreeable obscurity which gives repose and refreshment to the mind, and enables it to enter upon a new day with recruited powers and enlarged capacities, and gives zest to the enjoyments and energy to the duties which belong to it.

The morning of the spiritual state is that which is treated of in the last words of David. And it is said that the Lord shall be as the morning, when the sun riseth, a morning without clouds. The Lord is the Sun whose rising gives birth to the morning ; because His rising is His exaltation in the affections of the heart, which gives Him an ascendancy in the mind, and thus gives Him the influence and control over it, which result in the diffusion of light and peace over the whole inward

man. The many exhortations to exalt the Lord have all reference to the exalting of Him in the heart. Nor are we to suppose that we can practically exalt Him in any other way. We exalt the Lord practically when we exalt His love and wisdom, His goodness and truth, His justice and judgment, in our understandings and hearts. When His love and wisdom are exalted, the Lord is exalted ; when they dwell in us, the Lord dwells in us ; for the Divine Being can only dwell in that which is His own, or in what is from Himself. Justice and judgment are the habitation of His throne in the lowly and contrite heart, as well as in the mansions of eternity. These form His habitation in the mind, and in them only can He be exalted.

But how are the principles of justice and judgment to be exalted ? By shunning and abhorring whatever is contrary to them. The Lord cannot be exalted by a mere devotional act or by mental excitement. The foundations of His "habitation" must be laid in humility and self-abasement, and the graces which enter into its formation must each rest on self-denial. The idea of exalting God before we have humbled self is vain, and the labour must be fruitless. It is from this practical error that there is so little of the true exaltation of God in the Church and in the lives of its members. Where are the evidences, the fruits of such exaltation ? When God is truly exalted in the mind, the virtues which proceed from Him will be prominent in the life—there will be meekness, gentleness, kindness, forbearance, and all those virtues which bespeak an equal if not a greater regard for the feelings and the welfare of others than for our own. These are the true effects of the Lord's exaltation, or of man's true humiliation ; for the one cannot exist without the other. It is mocking for the proud or the self-righteous to speak of exalting God. Those who consider themselves better and more righteous than others, have acquired but little knowledge of themselves, and less knowledge of God. This knowledge has the certain effect of making us think lowly of ourselves, and highly of others in comparison ; being the very opposite of the practice of the world, where there is an unhappy readiness to offend and to take offence, to injure and to revenge an injury.

If we can ever hope to experience the dawn of a morning without clouds, we must subdue those evil passions which becloud and agitate the mind, and prevent the truth and love of God from giving light and peace. This is our peculiar duty ; for if we deny ourselves of evil, God will implant goodness ; for He waits to be gracious, and He must ever wait till the ungracious things of our selfhood are removed by active resistance and obedience.

Until evil is resisted in the inward life, and desisted from in the outward conduct, from a sense of duty to God, no good thing can be implanted even in the inner life. But after this has been effected,

there is another important and blessed work to be effected. The good insinuated into the inner man by the Lord during our practical fidelity to Him, is to be brought down into the outer man; the good of the affections and thoughts is to be made the good of the works and words of the outward life and conversation. These are the tender grass springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain. Here we have a beautiful instance of the system of analogy that runs through the whole Word of God. Heaven is emblematical of the spiritual mind, and the earth is emblematical of the natural mind. Truth, like rain, descends from the heaven of the spiritual mind and falls upon the earth of the natural mind, and makes it fruitful. We read of the heaven being shut up, when there is no rain; for the spiritual mind is actually closed by evil, when no heavenly truth can descend to the natural mind below, so that there is spiritual drought and famine. We read again the Divine promise, that if we bring our offering to the Lord, He will open the windows of heaven and pour us out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.

But there is sunshine as well as rain needed to make the earth fruitful. So must there be love as well as truth to make the life fruitful in righteousness. The tender grass grows out of the earth by clear shining after rain. How true is this spiritually. Truth is most necessary and useful for our growth in goodness. But without love truth would be as fruitless as rain without sunshine. It is the clear shining of love after the rain of truth has watered the good ground of an honest heart, that causes growth and fructification in the life.

It is the same in our relation to each other as it is in the mind itself. It is not sufficient that in our intercourse with each other we are truthful, we need also to be loving. Truth, precious as it is, existing or dispensed by itself, is cold and unproductive of the good of which it is capable, as a power working under the influence of love. What would the state of childhood be if we gave the young mind truth but gave the young heart no love? Is not the sunshine of love as necessary for the growth of the young life as the rain of truth? So with our friendships. So with our spiritual brotherhood. Truth is one of the essential elements of real usefulness in all the relations of life, but love is the uniting principle. To speak the truth in love is the perfection of teaching and of admonishing. Above all, therefore, the religious teacher must be a man of love as well as of truth. He must be faithful in teaching the truth and enforcing its lessons, but unless he give the clear shining of love after the rain of truth, he will fail to produce the good which should be aimed at as the ultimate result of his sacred office. How beautifully were these two united in the teaching and example of our great Teacher, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER XXVI.

DAVID'S MIGHTY MEN : THREE BRING HIM WATER FROM THE
WELL OF BETHLEHEM.*2 Samuel* xxiii. 8-29.

THE feats of the leaders of David's army form the principal topic of the remaining part of the 23rd chapter, and occupy a conspicuous place in the 21st. Their extraordinary valour and prowess were not unworthy of those who led on the hosts of him who was the dread of the enemies of Israel.

So long as war shall continue, these qualities will be prized, and their chivalrous exercise will command admiration. And justly so. War, though a great evil, is, as yet, an unavoidable one. Wars may be regarded as the eruptions of the moral volcanoes which relieve the internal fires that produce them, which diminish and will finally exhaust them, so far as they require a visible outlet. As thousands of extinct volcanoes on our globe attest the diminution of the cause that produced them, and give a certain promise of the gradual and complete extinction of the whole ; so war, once the almost natural result of the collision of the tribes and nations of the earth, is gradually becoming less wide in its extent, less ferocious in its character, and less frequent in its occurrence. The internal fire of the lust of wealth and power, with the cruelty and revenge which that lust inspires, has now fewer outlets. And although these may be in themselves extremely formidable and in action truly terrible, yet is the evil of war, though more concentrated, greatly moderated ; and humanity and religion, as they obtain ascendancy over men, will convince them that peace and goodwill are the only true means of securing national as well as individual prosperity and happiness.

The wars and warriors of the Scriptures are, however, designed to lead us to the contemplation of far other subjects than national strife and personal deeds of martial glory. They are designed to lead us to a consideration of those inward strivings, those conflicts between the principles of spiritual light and darkness, which constitute the warfare of the spiritual life. In considering these we do not exclude the indirect consideration of natural wars. Men war against each other because they do not war against themselves. The ultimate fate of war itself is to be decided, not on the battle-field, but in the human mind. Within us is the world of causes, without us is the world of effects. So far as men conquer evil and establish the empire of good

in themselves, they will cease to war against each other. As they become the subjects of the kingdom of Jesus Christ they will desire and strive to overcome the world in themselves, that they may be unworldly in their conduct towards each other. The Author of Christianity, who was the pattern of the Christian life and character, exemplified this in His own person, both in His inward experience and in His outward life. He came into the world for the purpose of overcoming the world and bringing it under obedience and into harmony with Himself. But how did He seek to effect this great object? Not by outward physical war, but by inward spiritual conflict. He resisted and overcame the world in Himself. At the same time, and by the same acts, He subdued the kingdom of darkness, which prompts us through our worldly-mindedness to deeds of aggression against our fellow-creatures. While the Saviour was thus engaged in an inward strife with the principles of fallen humanity, which He in mercy assumed for the redemption and salvation of mankind, His life was one of purest love and beneficence. His warfare was within, mercy and peace marked the progress of His life without. As this was the character of the true Christ, it is also the character of true Christians. "In this world," said our Lord to His disciples, "ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." The world which the Lord overcame is that which the disciple is to conquer—the world in himself, with all its principalities and powers.

As this warfare is spiritual, so are the instruments and agents by which it is to be carried on. It is not to be engaged in with carnal weapons, but by the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God; nor is this sanctified and powerful instrument to be wielded by mighty men, but by mighty principles. The principles in which such extraordinary power resides are those of love and truth, in their various forms of goodness, meekness, humility, patience, sincerity, simplicity, integrity, prudence, but clothed with zeal for the accomplishment of great objects or the performance of great deeds. By these and their kindred qualities the Lord effects our deliverance from the power of our spiritual foes, those of our own household. For we have the Philistine, and the Egyptian, and even the wild beast in our own natural understandings and hearts—we have the spurious intelligence, the false science, and the savage lusts and appetites that spring up in our minds spontaneously, and find in our hereditary nature their native and congenial home. That pride of personal wisdom, too, which has an overweening confidence in its own power, without the wisdom and power of God, is the giant principle, the parent of self-reliance, whatever shape it may assume. The thoughts that obtrude themselves into our minds, inspiring them with the

notion that the objects and ends of life may be attained by mere human wisdom and skill, and leading us to suppose that meekness of heart and lowliness of mind are only other names for feebleness of purpose and lack of intelligence—these are the Rephaim and the Anakim, in whose sight the true Israel are as grasshoppers.

It was in the valley of Rephaim that the troop of the Philistines had pitched when the circumstance took place which is here narrated. The relation carries us back to the beginning of the reign of David, the circumstance having taken place soon after the tribes had anointed him king over Israel. In the 5th chapter, at the 17th verse, we read that "when the Philistines heard that they had anointed David king over Israel, all the Philistines came up to seek David; and David heard of it, and went down to the hold. The Philistines also came and spread themselves in the valley of Rephaim."

The cave of Adullam is celebrated as having afforded David shelter and concealment when, at a still earlier period of his history, he fled from the face of Saul, an incident which was considered in its place. It describes a state of deep temptation and of great mental suffering, so well expressed by David himself in the 142nd Psalm: "I looked on my right hand, and beheld, but there was no man that would know me: refuge failed me; no man cared for my soul." In the present instance David was pressed by another enemy. The Philistines who had slain Saul now sought to destroy his successor. David was compelled to seek refuge in the hold; and the hosts of the enemy were spread out in the valley of the giants, and their garrison was at Bethlehem, not far from Adullam. Though now surrounded and watched by a powerful enemy, David was not in that condition in which "no man cared for his soul." The people of Israel were on his side; "and three of the thirty chief went down, and came to David in the harvest time unto the cave of Adullam." Shut up in the hold at that season when no shower falls in Palestine, when the ground is parched and the streams are dried up, David, in the extremity of his suffering from burning thirst, called to remembrance the cool refreshing spring of which he had so often drunk, and exclaimed, "Oh that one would give me drink of the water of the well of Bethlehem, which is by the gate!" Almost every one has had some slight experience of the intolerable nature of extreme thirst, and of the longing it produces for that most delicious, and, one might almost say, that most precious of all the natural gifts of God's bounty to His creatures, the cool and limpid water-spring. But this has its analogy in the experience of mental thirst, the desire not merely for knowledge but for truth, which is almost as universally felt as the thirst for water, and the defect or want of which, where the desire is ardent, is not less intolerable. In no sound mind is the desire for knowledge entirely wanting, although the

knowledge desired may be extremely various in different minds. There is a love of knowledge common to all minds in this state, and there is particular love of knowledge which has for its end the attainment of special objects. The man of science makes a special pursuit of scientific knowledge, the lawyer of legal knowledge, the physician of medical knowledge, and every other one that which relates to his function, and even the evil-doer cultivates the knowledge which promises him the means of success in evil. In all these cases the desire of knowledge is in particular instances not less ardent and distressing than the thirst for water. How does the philosopher, attempting the solution of some profound problem, thirst for the knowledge that may enable him to accomplish his purpose, and with unwearied toil dig deep into the mount of science, in hopes that the well-spring may burst forth to satisfy the desires of his longing mind. Still more intense perhaps is the desire for knowledge when some beloved object is far away in the midst of danger and imminent death—exposed to the perils of war or of travel, in the burning sands of Africa or in the ice-bound regions of the pole.

If mental thirst or the love of natural knowledge is thus intense, still more must be the desire of spiritual knowledge, which may be called the thirst of the soul. If the nature and ardency of the desire increase with the excellency of the object, religious desire must be the highest and intensest of all. If it is not felt to be so, it must be because we do not so ardently desire the solution of the religious problem, or the pursuit of the religious life, or the realization of the religious hope. If we truly prize life and immortality, we cannot but desire the knowledge which brings them to light; and any obstacle that comes between us and the knowledge we desire, that cuts off the communication between the soul and the water of life, will produce a sense of severe privation, and bring the soul into a state of deep distress and suffering. The spiritual knowledge of which we now speak is not that which may be called the science of religion—a knowledge of the doctrines of the Bible. It is that which is felt to come immediately home to us as beings who know that we stand between life and death, and in whom the fear of eternal death and the love of eternal life have been truly awakened. It is not your men of mere religious science, but those of religious life, that feel this thirst of the soul. Men may indeed thirst for the water of science, but that is entirely different from thirst for the water of life. The water of science is desired as the means of imparting a pleasurable sensation to the mind, but the water of life is desired as the means of securing spiritual existence to the soul. The want of the one is only the absence of pleasure, the want of the other is the absence of happiness and eternal life. Temptation arising from the defect or want of Divine truth is only experienced by

those who have entered on the life of truth, and to whom therefore truth is the means of life. Such a temptation did our Lord experience in the passion of the Cross. He of whom David was a type, and whose conflicts, trials, and sufferings were shadowed forth by those of the king of Israel, was then pressed upon by the whole power of the enemy, the kingdom of darkness. In that temptation despair for the salvation of the human race, which was the end He had in view in coming into the world, and for which He suffered and died, fell upon the Saviour; and the ardency of His desire for the salvation and happiness of His creatures produced in the suffering humanity its analogous state. When the Lord said, "I thirst," He expressed the agonizing desire of His holy mind infinitely more than the raging thirst of His body. His thirst was eminently the desire for eternal life, and for securing the means of attaining it; but it was for the eternal life of others, not His own. His thirst was also for the water of life; for His desire was to be filled as to His humanity with that living truth which was equally necessary to His overcoming in temptation, and to His becoming a fountain of living water to His famishing children. Nor is the water of the well of Bethlehem without its typical significance in reference to the Lord and His people. Bethlehem literally signifies "the house of bread;" and here it is to be regarded as the house of water also. Bethlehem, the place of the Lord's birth, may be understood to point to Him as the bread of life, in whom is the fountain of the water of life.

In reference to the Christian disciple in his states of trial and temptation, when there is a famine, not of natural bread or water, but of the hearing of the Word of God, longing for the water of the well of Bethlehem is expressive of the desire of the soul to drink of the living water of the fountain which has been opened up for us in the house of David—the living truth proceeding from the love of God in His Divine Humanity. The well of which David desired to drink was beside, literally in, the gate of Bethlehem; a gate being introductory; from which the Lord calls Himself the door, His Humanity being the medium through which there is access to His eternal Divinity, the Humanity itself being the immediate fountain or well of water from which men draw their supplies.

David's longing for the water of the well of Bethlehem was not without its effect, though the final result was not that which his friends intended. Three of the thirty mighty men of David, hearing the words of the king, "brake through the host of the Philistines, and drew water out of the well of Bethlehem, that was by the gate, and took it, and brought it to David: nevertheless he would not drink thereof, but poured it out unto the Lord."

Naturally considered, David evidently regarded this daring feat as

an act of courage, but not of prudence ; the risk was too great for the object. His will and judgment were not in it, but were against it ; and had he been previously consulted he would have condemned and prohibited the attempt. Thus in spiritual things do we sometimes act from the ardour of zeal untempered by discretion, and afterwards find, in the moments of cool reflection, that the understanding does not approve the deed, however generous and well intentioned it may have been.

In the operations of the mind and thence of the life there is a continual action and reaction of the inner and outer man. The inner man occupies a higher and more peaceful region of the mind ; the outer man treads the earth, and has to engage in the toils, share in the excitements, and endure the storms of life. The inner man is the seat of our principles, our conscience, our essential and ruling life. The outer man has more to do with ways and means than with principles and ends. The inner man may be considered as the legislative, the outer man as the executive, branch of the government of the soul. From the inner man come forth the laws of life, but the outer man is left to interpret and to execute them. The outer man is not a passive instrument, but an intelligent and reactive agent. Our inner man expresses his desires or enunciates his laws, our outer man has to interpret and execute them. But he does not always interpret them rightly, nor execute them faithfully. Indeed it is sometimes extremely difficult to do so. As the popular will may be so strong as to impede or defy the law, so may our natural man greatly modify or entirely resist the will of our inner man. This kind of action and reaction between the inner and outer man goes on continually. Great must be the difference in the character and results of this reciprocal action in the different stages of the regenerate life—in the early stages when the natural mind is yet turbulent, passionate, impatient, and in the later stages when it has become reconciled and accustomed to the mild and easy yoke of heavenly love and truth. In this case the inner and outer man act as one ; and this unity of action constitutes regeneration, producing true peace and solid happiness. This unity of action does not imply a blending of the agents and reagent. On the contrary, as the inner and outer man, the spiritual mind and the natural, become more harmonized and united, they acquire a more distinctive character and action. The line between them becomes more distinct, and so do their functions. The inner man retires more within himself, and yet acts more powerfully upon the outer. He is more remote from the turmoil and more secure from the dangers and the conflicts of life. And so, the more any one is a Christian the more he enjoys the tranquillity of inward peace, however his natural man may be suffering from outward tribulation. When the life of David had been endangered in

the encounter with one of the sons of the giants, the men of David swore unto him, "Thou shalt go no more out to battle, that thou quench not the light of Israel."

During the progress of the regenerate life much of the reaction of the natural mind must imperfectly represent the action of the spiritual. The desires of the mind may be carried out with zeal and energy, but not always with wisdom. And when this is the case, that which had been the object of the desire, though it may be secured, cannot be appropriated; for nothing can enter into the inner life which does not unite in itself, or is not the result of, both love and wisdom, zeal and prudence.

Although David refused to drink the water of the well of Bethlehem, for which he had longed, he "poured it out unto the Lord. And he said, Be it far from me, O Lord, that I should do this: is not this the blood of the men that went in jeopardy of their lives?" To have drunk of the water thus procured would have been equivalent to accepting the blood of a human sacrifice, since the water was regarded as the blood of these men. However such sacrifice may be the fruit of religious zeal, it is greatly deficient in religious wisdom. In one sense human sacrifice is too great an offering. God's acceptance of human sacrifice, and especially of voluntary human sacrifice, would represent the absorption of the human soul into the Divine essence—a notion which, being a corruption of one of the highest truths, is itself one of the greatest errors. Christianity requires us indeed to offer ourselves as sacrifices unto God; but it requires us to offer ourselves living sacrifices—to devote the affections of our hearts and the labour of our lives to His service; and to strive to attain conjunction with the Lord, which enables us to feel, that the more fully we are His the more distinctly we are our own.

To pour out unto the Lord the water of the well of Bethlehem, as the blood of those who obtained it, is to acknowledge that life, which is the gift of God, is His, and is to be ascribed to Him alone, and to look to Him to sanctify it, and render it fit for His sacred service. This pouring out of the water reminds us of the truth that "we must needs die, and are as water spilt on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again." Man cannot give life, neither can he restore it. This is true of spiritual and eternal, as well as of natural and temporal life. The breath of natural life and the spirit of regenerating life are equally the gift of God. To Him should they be poured out, in the spirit of devout acknowledgment, that every good and every perfect gift cometh from above. And where we have erred in the right employment of the powers which the Lord confers upon us, or of the graces which He bestows, when zeal may have carried us where wisdom would have forbidden us to venture, may we listen to the dictates of that

Divine voice, which never fails to speak out clearly and distinctly when even the generous impulses of the mind have carried us beyond the bounds of prudence.

CHAPTER XXVII.

DAVID'S SIN IN NUMBERING THE PEOPLE, AND ITS PUNISHMENT.

2 Samuel xxiv. 1-15.

It is impossible to form a right judgment respecting the character of the Jewish history, unless we consider it with reference to the Jewish dispensation. That dispensation was not only suited to the people and to the age for whose benefit it was established; it was also representative of a dispensation which was yet to come, being the shadow, but having little or nothing of the substance, of a real Church. In consequence of this all things that existed amongst the Jews, and happened to them, were representative of the spiritual states and their consequences, as characteristic of a higher and purer dispensation.

To understand the crime of David we must know what was represented by the people and by numbering them.

The people of Israel represented the spiritual Church. The twelve tribes of Israel, like the twelve apostles of the Lamb, represented all the graces and virtues, or all the principles of goodness and truth, which constitute the Church, considered under a spiritual idea; from which circumstance it was that the names of both were engraven on the walls and gates of the New Jerusalem. As the Church may exist in one individual mind as well as of an innumerable multitude, the people of Israel denote the numerous goods and truths which constitute the kingdom of the Lord in the regenerate mind.

To number, in the Word, signifies to know the nature and quality of the several parts and numerous particulars of which anything consists, and to dispose those parts and their particulars in just order, so as to form one perfect whole. The numbering of the sons of Israel, when done by Divine command, represented the disposition or arrangement of all the principles of goodness and truth in the regenerate mind, so that such a mind may be a form of heaven. This spiritual meaning of numbering, and the nature of the arrangement which it represents, are treated of frequently in the Scriptures. In the 40th of Isaiah it is said that the Lord numbereth the stars and calleth them all by names. Numbering in this case means that He who created the host of heaven has disposed them in that perfect order which makes up the grandeur and beauty of the whole astral heavens, which are

upheld by His power and directed in their courses by His wisdom. But when we regard the stars, which nightly declare the glory of God, as symbolizing the pure truths of His Word, which He sets in the heaven of a regenerate mind, and which spiritually declare His glory and manifest His power and goodness, the arrangement of these truths, and their preservation in a state of harmony and order, must be regarded as a result of Divine power, if not greater in itself, at least more important and beneficial to us, than the numbering and ordinating of the stars. The truths of the Word are themselves the subjects of a Divine arrangement, by which their harmonious and united testimony to the love and wisdom of God is obtained, and by which their combined operation in the mind and life of the regenerate man is secured. Another instance of the spiritual sense of numbering occurs in the New Testament, where the Lord, speaking of the minuteness of the Divine circumspection, assures us that the very hairs of our heads are all numbered. This implies not only that the Divine knowledge, but also that the Divine circumspection, extends to the least of our states and circumstances, thoughts and affections. And it further teaches that in the mind of every true disciple the principles of goodness and truth are so arranged or ordained, that the Divine government is exercised in a way which is adapted most fully to promote the soul's spiritual welfare.

The numbering of the children of Israel represented, therefore, the arrangement or ordination of all the principles of goodness and truth in the minds of the regenerate, by which the Lord is present with them and operates savingly in and by them.

Such a spiritual arrangement may be illustrated by the works as well as by the Word of God. In all the Divine works we find an arrangement existing according to certain laws, by which the Divine power is exercised and the Divine purpose is accomplished. Our planetary system is held together, and the motions of the planetary bodies are regulated, by certain fixed laws. The perfection of the human body, as an instrument of the soul and mind, and as capable of sensation and motion, is the result of the arrangement of its parts in such an order of mutual dependence and relation as fits them for united and harmonious action. Nor is the mind itself to be conceived of as existing and acting except as an organized form, constituted in an order suitable to its nature and necessary for the exercise of its faculties. The natural mind of man is formed to the image of the world; but the spiritual mind is formed to the image of heaven, and by re-creation, or regeneration, becomes a heaven. All the affections of good and perceptions of truth are arranged into such a form, or according to such an order, as makes the regenerate mind a heaven in miniature. For the heaven of angels is as one man, of which all

the inhabitants are members, each occupying a place and exercising a function agreeable to his quality and his capacity for use ; and it is in virtue of this perfect arrangement, which is produced and preserved by the laws of order, resulting from the Divine perfection, which is order itself, that heaven is under the perfect government of the Divine love and wisdom, and is preserved in a state of unity, harmony, and blessedness. In proportion as heavenly order is introduced into the regenerate mind the same happy results are experienced.

The particulars of that order which is introduced into the mind by regeneration cannot be fully comprehended by the regenerate themselves, because its particulars do not come to their perception. It is possible, however, and even necessary for them to know the general spiritual arrangements of which they themselves are the subjects. To compare the mind with the body, the regenerate are in the order of heaven when love to the Lord constitutes the head, love to the neighbour the breast, the love of the world the lower extremities, and the self-love the feet. When this order exists, love to God and love to the neighbour rule, and the loves of self and of the world serve. This is heavenly order ; for when the love of self and the love of the world are subordinated to the love of God and the neighbour, neither honour nor gain will be sought, nor even accepted, without the sanction of the laws of justice and equity, which are the laws of love and charity.

This order of the principles of the Church and of heaven in the human mind cannot be introduced at once, but is the work of time. Every unregenerate man is in a state of inverted order. In natural men the loves of self and of the world constitute the head, and love to God and love to the neighbour constitute the feet—for even natural men can be moral and religious when morality and religion serve to promote their natural ends. Man cannot be restored to the order of heaven but by degrees. He must first be brought to love his neighbour whom he hath seen, before he can be brought to love God whom he hath not seen. The first general effect of the order which is introduced into the minds of those who have entered on the regenerate life, is to exalt the love of the neighbour above the love of the world. The supremacy in the mind of love to God is a higher degree of order and of spiritual life. These two different ordinations of which the regenerate mind is the subject, were represented in two distinct numberings of the people of Israel by express Divine command. The first took place not long after the people had left Egypt, the second took place immediately previous to their entering the Promised Land. The desert in which the Israelites wandered forty years represented self-denial and spiritual temptation, taking up the cross daily. The numbering of the people at the beginning of their journey represented the institu-

tion of that spiritual order which prepares the mind for undergoing temptation, which is intellectual, or the arrangement of truths in the understanding ; the second numbering represented that more perfect ordination which follows as the result of temptation, and which prepares the regenerate for entrance into heaven. This is that perfect order which relates more to the will, and in which love and charity rule. No one can undergo spiritual temptations while self-love and the love of the world have the dominion ; for no one can resist evil from the love of evil. Satan cannot cast out Satan. Something of Divine order must be introduced to enable the mind to undergo temptation ; and that order must consist in the love of the neighbour or the love of God being exalted above the love of self or of the world, if not in the will at least in the understanding.

But this is not all that is required for success in the spiritual life. It must be seen and acknowledged that all goodness and truth, and the true order in which they exist in the mind, are from the Lord alone. The necessity of this acknowledgment was represented in the law, delivered by the Lord to Moses, that in taking the sum of the children of Israel they should give every man a ransom for his soul unto the Lord, half a shekel, after the shekel of the sanctuary, lest there should be a plague in numbering them (Exod. xxx. 12, 13). The giving of this piece of silver represented the acknowledgment that all the good of charity and all the truths of faith, and their ordination and disposition in the mind, are from the Lord alone.

It will be seen, then, what was involved and represented in David's numbering the people. This numbering He did, not only without any Divine command or authority, but in compliance with a temptation to commit the crime of numbering Israel and Judah. The temptation is said to have come from God Himself—a form of expression which occurs in the Word, as being agreeable to appearance, the real truth being that God tempts no man, but that every man is tempted when he is drawn aside by his own lusts and enticed. In the First Book of Chronicles (xxi. 1) it is said that Satan stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number the people. David's numbering the people, regardless of the warning of Joab, represented the sin of which man is guilty when he claims for himself the authorship or the merit of the goodness and truth which he knows or possesses, and makes them subject to his own will and wisdom ; in which case they cease to be good and true, for perverted order perverts those things whose order is perverted. And as the natural will and wisdom of man are opposed to the will and wisdom of God, to claim the gifts and assume the prerogative of God is to divide and destroy.

This evil might be illustrated by many examples, but may itself be detected under many different forms. It is this very principle which

prompts the unbeliever daringly to impeach the moral government of God, as if it had imperfections which the wisdom of man could correct. It is the same principle which has given birth to those numerous and discordant arrangements of the truth of the Word by the authors of the various sectaries, each claiming the possession, in some instances the exclusive possession, of the truth of God, and the keys of the kingdom of heaven. But this evil does not lie at the door of infidelity and heresy only. Selfish and worldly loves are sufficiently powerful in the mind of even the true Christian disciple to lay him open to the temptation, at least, to commit this sin, by giving self-intelligence the right to interfere with the established order of the Divine arrangements and operations for the government of his mind and life. The consequences of yielding to such subtle insinuations are frequently set before us in the Sacred Word, and in a very striking manner in the present historical relation. And no doubt such admonitions and warnings are required, since they are so repeatedly given. No adversaries are so deceitful as those of our own minds. No treasures require more to be guarded than those of love and truth. No degradation is so great as that which is the result of apostasy.

We may, therefore, profitably consider the punishment which was brought upon Israel and Judah by the numbering of the people.

In no cases is it more necessary to consider the events of the Jewish history in connection with the Jewish dispensation, than in the infliction of those terrible punishments which followed their acts of disobedience. As punishments, these seem, in many instances, to bear no very perceptible connection with, or to bear no just proportion to, the sins they committed. Yet we cannot suppose that the Judge of all the earth acted capriciously on any of those occasions, however singular or severe some of His judgments may seem. He who is order itself cannot have acted independently of the law of cause and effect. The difference between the circumstances in which the Jews were placed and those in which we stand consists in this, that the effect followed the cause immediately and visibly; whereas natural effects from spiritual and moral causes are now gradually, and in many cases imperceptibly, developed. Although in the present instance the crime appears to have been David's, while the people only endured the punishment; yet the relation itself states that David's act was the result of an evil which existed amongst the Israelites as a nation. "Again the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel, and He moved David against them to say, Go, number Israel and Judah." And we may consider the anger of the Lord as having been kindled by their rebellion and insurrection against that authority which He, at their own urgent solicitation, established amongst them.

After the numbering of the people had been completed, Gad was

commissioned to go to David and give him the choice of the punishment which should ensue : he might choose seven years of famine, or three months' flight before his enemies, or three days' pestilence. These punishments signified the effects of the evil which the numbering of the people represented. The three years of famine signifies that those who destroy Divine order, after it has been established in their minds, deprive themselves of all the good of love and the truth of faith ; the three months' flight before enemies signifies that evils and falsities continually pursue them ; and the three days' pestilence signifies that the remains of truth and goodness received from infancy perish. David chose the last. This undoubtedly was of the Divine Providence, to signify, in the first place, that with the Israelitish and Jewish nation, at the time our Lord came into the world, everything good and true was about to perish ; and, secondly, and more interiorly, that the inversion of spiritual order in any human mind results in the total destruction of spiritual life, even of that which is acquired before man acts from liberty according to reason. The nature as well as the extent of the devastation is expressed representatively in the number of persons who died of the pestilence. Seven is a holy number, and seventy is expressive of that of which holiness is predicated. The number ten not only exalts the idea of holiness, meant by the number seven, but is itself expressive of the holy principles that were in this case destroyed. This number, which is that of the commandments, is symbolical of all the principles of goodness and truth, the sum of which are love to God and love to man, on which hang all the law and the prophets. As the ten commandments are the laws of life, and are the duties first impressed upon the minds of the young, they signify also what remains and is preserved in the mind during advancing life. When the new spiritual life begins, these are the rudiments of the new state ; and so important are they that no regenerative process could be commenced without them. In proportion to the quality and quantity of these remnants of heavenly things in the mind is the capacity and inclination to receive the principles of goodness and truth, and so to become spiritual.

When, on the other hand, the Church in general, or any of its members in particular, decline or fall away from a state of integrity, and invert the order on which the stability of the Church and the efficacy of religion depend, these remains of what is good and true become fewer and feebler, until they almost cease to exist. They are the first to live and the last to die. Were they entirely to cease, the human race would perish, or cease to exist as rational beings, and the very capacity of becoming spiritual would be destroyed. "Except the Lord of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, and we should have been like unto Gomorrah." When, in

a Church or a human being, this remnant becomes so small that no restoration to a state of true spiritual life can be effected, there is a judgment, which brings the Church to an end. Such a state in the Jewish Church is indicated by the Lord's anger being kindled against Israel, and His moving David to number the people. For what is called anger in God is the contrariety of the state of the Church to the Divine character and attributes ; His moving David to number the people is the natural effect of this state, in the inversion of order ; and the punishment of the crime is the destruction of the holy principles of goodness and truth, even to the very small remnant that would have saved Israel and Judah from becoming as Sodom and like unto Gomorrah. The seventy thousand that fell under the pestilence were taken away for some wise and merciful purpose even towards them ; but it was at the same time a representative judgment, and the history of it is written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE DESTROYING ANGEL COMMANDED TO SPARE JERUSALEM.

2 *Samuel* xxiv. 16-25.

HAVING in the previous chapter considered the two particulars, David's sin in, and his punishment for, numbering the people, it may be useful to follow it up by examining those which relate to the preservation of Jerusalem, and David's building an altar in the threshing-floor of Araunah the Jebusite. The rearing of that altar was indeed the means of staying the plague and preserving the city. For Gad the prophet "came that day to David, and said unto him, Go up, rear an altar unto the Lord in the threshing-floor of Araunah the Jebusite. And David built there an altar unto the Lord, and offered burnt-offerings and peace-offerings. So the Lord was intreated for the land, and the plague was stayed from Israel."

As plagues and calamities of other kinds are attributed in Scripture to the anger of the Lord, their progress is represented as being arrested by the Lord's anger being appeased. A remarkable instance of this occurs in the 16th chapter of Numbers, which contains an account of the rebellion of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. On the morrow after these men and all their company had been swallowed up of the earth, "all the congregation murmured against Moses and against Aaron, saying, Ye have killed the people of the Lord. . . . And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Get you up from among this congregation, that I

may consume them as in a moment." Moses, being aware of the nature of the evil and the means of staying its progress, said to Aaron, "Take a censer, and put fire therein from off the altar, and put on incense, and go quickly unto the congregation, and make an atonement for them : for there is wrath gone out from the Lord ; the plague is begun. . . . And he stood between the dead and the living ; and the plague was stayed." The wrath of the Lord, as we have seen, is an expression implying the rejection and also the perversion of His love and truth by the Church and by man. For as all protection and blessing are from the Lord, and are experienced by those who love and believe in Him, so all spiritual misfortune and misery are the result of rejecting Him as the Object of love and faith. In His love is life, in the refusal or rejection of His love is death. Spiritual rebellion—the renouncing of His authority, the presumptuous violation of His commands—makes us the subjects of wrath, because it brings us into communion with that kingdom which is opposite in its nature and experience to the kingdom of God. Thence come all the spiritual plagues that afflict the human race. And when the mind admits into itself the influence of evil, and adopts evil as a ruling principle, disease and death invade the whole of the will and understanding. There are no means of arresting the plague of the soul but by seeking reconciliation and conjunction with the Lord. These are signified in the Word by atonement ; and atonement is made or effected by true spiritual worship. In the merely natural, or what may be called the Jewish sense, atonement seems to man the appeasing of Divine wrath, and the reconciliation of God to man ; for since to God is attributed wrath, to Him must also be attributed reconciliation. But the Christian or spiritual sense teaches that there is no wrath in God, and that as the anger is on the part of man, on man's part must also be the reconciliation. The doctrine of the New Testament is, that "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them." "Now then," says the apostle, "we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us : we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." How is this reconciliation to be effected but by repenting of our evils, acknowledging with David that we have sinned and done very foolishly ; or by turning in sincere worship to the Lord as our preserver and restorer ; like Aaron with his censer containing fire from off the altar. In the highest sense, Aaron, as the high priest, represented the Lord Himself ; and it is still true spiritually that the Lord Himself, as our great High Priest, stands between the living and the dead. He is present with every human soul, ready to save, by sanctifying the heart with the holy fire of His Divine love, infusing life into every affection and thought of the mind. And when the Divine love is received and acknowledged the soul is preserved.

It was therefore when David had acknowledged his sin, and, in obedience to the command of the Lord by the prophet, had reared an altar, and had offered burnt-offerings and peace-offerings, that "the Lord repented Him of the evil, and said to the angel that destroyed the people, It is enough : stay now thine hand." We may here pause to inquire why an angel was the destroyer. But we need not marvel at this when we find that God Himself is represented as acting the part of a destroyer. The death of the first-born of the Egyptians is spoken of as having been effected by Jehovah Himself. And yet neither God nor His holy angels can destroy either the bodies or the souls of men. Plagues, and pestilences, and wars are the results of evil, and are effected by the agency, not of good but of evil angels. Why, then, it may be inquired, should they be ascribed to God and His angelic ministers? In the letter of the Word, all things and events, even evil things and calamitous events, are ascribed to God, in accordance with the general truth that God is the Creator and Governor of the world. But under this general truth there are particular truths, which reveal distinctions. It is true that God creates both good and evil things, for nothing exists which did not originally, and does not now, derive its life from Him ; but good things were created and are sustained through heaven, and evil things through hell. God is the sole Governor of the world, but He governs by the laws of permission as well as by the laws of provision. Good He provides, evil He permits. Calamities come through evil, and are permitted for the purpose of restraining or correcting it. But calamities do not come through the agency of good but of evil spirits. In all permissions which are granted to evil spirits, angels are present to moderate or arrest the hands of the destroyers. Evil spirits do not need to be employed to do these direful works. Hell is in the continual effort to rush forth to the work of destruction ; and it is only by the controlling power of the Lord that they are prevented from coming in like a flood, to carry the inhabitants of the world away into the gulf of perdition. The Divine wisdom measures the extent of the Divine permission, and says to the demoniac power, "Thus far shalt thou go and no further, and here shall thy proud waves be stayed." When the angel stretched out his hand upon Jerusalem to destroy it, the Lord is said to have repented Him of the evil. The Lord is not a man that He should lie, nor a son of man that He should repent ; and yet there is a Divine meaning in His recorded repentance. That which is repentance in man is mercy in God ; and that in man which obtains forgiveness is that in God which grants it. There is this essential difference between man and God. The finite changes, the Infinite is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. He does not change from severity to mercy. He never becomes merciful. He is mercy itself, and His mercy is

ever the same. But as, when men sin, He *seems* to be angry, so, when men repent, He *seems* to be merciful. Men's changed states towards Him produce seemingly changed states in Him towards men. All that is necessary to make God merciful and forgiving is to remove the evil and impenitence that prevent His mercy and forgiveness from finding their way into the hearts and lives of men. It was when the angel stretched out his hand upon Jerusalem that the Lord repented Him of the evil, and said to the angel that destroyed the people, "Stay thy hand: it is enough." Jerusalem was the holy city, the place where the tabernacle containing the ark of the testimony was reared; and it represented, in the general sense, the Church, and, in the particular sense, the interiors of the mind. In the devastation of the Church, the Lord never permits a full end, for in that case there could not be a new beginning; and in the devastations of those who endure temptation, the Lord preserves the inner man from the power of evil spirits, for if the destroying angel were allowed to enter there, the capacity as well as the means of salvation would be destroyed.

We shall now speak of these circumstances in their general and particular sense. The numbering of the people and destruction that followed, represented, as we have seen, the perversion and consummation of the Jewish Church. This completeness of the consummation of that Church is signified by the number of people who died of the plague. The preservation effected by the offerings made on the altar does not denote the preservation or restoration of the Jewish Church, but the raising up of a new Church in its place. The altar was raised by Divine direction in the threshing-floor of Araunah the Jebusite.

The Jebusites were one of the nations of Canaan whom the Israelites were commanded to disinherit; and Jerusalem was their stronghold. When Jerusalem was taken by David, the Jebusites were not entirely extirpated; but a remnant continued to live with the Jews. There were indeed two of the nations who were permitted to live with, though in subjection to, the Israelites—the Hivites, with whom Joshua made a covenant, and whom he made hewers of wood and drawers of water; and the Jebusites, who dwelt in Jerusalem. These two nations were preserved, because they represented those in whose idolatry there was something of good and something of truth. They were Gentiles in whom some of the principles of true religion could be implanted. David was required to rear an altar in the threshing-floor of Araunah the Jebusite, to represent that the Church which had become consummated amongst the Jews was to be transferred to the Gentiles. The pestilence continuing till the altar had been raised and offerings made in the floor of Araunah, describes representatively the continuance of the decline of the Church in the world, till the wasting corruption was arrested by the commencement of the Christian dispensation. It is

therefore recorded that the angel of the Lord was by the threshing-place of Araunah when his hand was stayed. It was upon the spot where the angel stood and on which the altar was reared that the temple of Solomon was afterwards built, as recorded in the Second Book of Chronicles. "Then Solomon began to build the house of the Lord at Jerusalem in mount Moriah, where the Lord appeared unto David his father, in the place that David had prepared in the threshing-floor of Ornan the Jebusite" (iii. 1). The temple was a representation of the Lord's Humanity, the temple of His body. The altar indeed had the same representation, with this difference, that the temple represented the Lord's Humanity as to Divine truth, and the altar represented the Humanity as to Divine goodness. When the temple was built, the altar of burnt-offerings was placed within the court to the east of the temple itself, the altar of incense being in the sanctuary, near the table on which was placed the shewbread. Indeed, one principal use of the tabernacle and temple was that the Lord might be worshipped according to the rites of the Mosaic law, and the altar was an essential part of the means by which that worship was performed, it being that on which the offerings were laid, and by which they were sanctified. The Lord therefore says in the Gospel, "Whether is greater the gift, or the altar that sanctifieth the gift?" Not only does the Divinity of the Lord dwell in His Humanity, as the ark of the testimony did in the holy of holies, but the Humanity, like the altar of the temple, is that through which our offerings of worship are presented to the essential Divinity, and by which they are sanctified, and made acceptable to the Lord. When this representative character of the altar and temple is known, it may be understood why the altar was raised, and the hand of the angel was stayed, at the floor of Araunah the Jebusite. Jerusalem itself was preserved. The reason of this is, as we have remarked, that in all the dispensations of His Providence the Lord so orders that there shall not be a full end; for however the Church may be corrupted and consummated, a remnant is saved, to form the commencement of a new Church. Unless this were the case, no new dispensation could be commenced after a former one had come to its end. No Church or dispensation is therefore permitted to expire, or to close by an entire cessation of life; but is brought to an end by a judgment upon it while it yet contains some vitality, so that out of the remnant of the old Church a new Church may be established. The Lord teaches this when He says, speaking of the darkness and corruption which were to precede His Second Coming, "Except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved; but for the elect's sake they shall be shortened." The shortening of the days is the bringing of the Church to its end, before it utterly expire by its own inherent

decay. It was from the remnant of the Jewish Church that the Lord formed the beginning of the Christian Church ; His apostles and first disciples being from the Jewish nation.

A similar Providence presides over the individuals of the human race as over the general Church. The numbering of the people and the pestilence which followed denote the entire perversion and destruction of the Church in those who fall away and terminate their life in a state of confirmed evil. With such there is a destruction of all goodness and truth, even of such as had been acquired from the period of childhood. Yet even in those cases some small remnant is preserved, for so much of the life or vitality of goodness and truth is preserved as is necessary to the existence of the faculties of liberty and rationality, without which nothing of humanity would exist. Something therefore remains which the worst can never utterly destroy, however much they may desire to do so ; it is therefore said of such, that they " shall seek death, and shall not find it ; and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them " (Rev. ix. 6). The destroying angel therefore ever stays his hand before there is an entire end. But in this world man, however far he may have departed from the way of truth and goodness, is never without the power to return. And all the judgments of the Lord are intended to bring him by correction to a state of humiliation and repentance, and thus to the true worship of the Lord. The repentance and worship by which the sinner turns to the Lord are signified by those of David. The altar was set in the threshing-floor of Araunah, because a threshing-floor signifies where there is the good of truth. Jerusalem signifies the Church as to doctrine or the doctrine of the Church, and corn signifies the good which is the chief support of spiritual life. By a corn-floor is also signified the separation of what is evil and false from what is good and true, for there the wheat is separated from the chaff. It also signifies temptation, for spiritual temptations are the means by which there is a separation of good and evil in the mind and life. The altar of true worship, by which there is conjunction with the Lord, and thence all the benefits of His redemption and salvation, as they are dispensed by Himself in His Divine Humanity, must be built and established in the good of truth, or in the charity which is acquired by a true and sincere faith—a principle of good and charity which can only be acquired by self-denial, as the means of separating all the evil of self-love and the love of the world from love to the Lord and the neighbour. In the monarch of Israel, humble and repentant, seeking to stay the destructive pestilence by building an altar in the threshing-floor of the Jebusite, we may see the penitent worshipping the Lord in simple holiness from the principle of sincere good, chastened and purified by spiritual trial and temptation.

We may observe in conclusion that in the individual sense David signifies the human intellect. In his numbering the people we see the intellect acting under the influence of the natural will, or the self-hood; but in his penitential worship we see the intellect acting under the influence of a will brought into a state of humble submission to the Divine will. Whenever the understanding acts from self-will, evil consequences ensue; when it acts in union with a humble heart, goodness and blessing are the result.

CHAPTER XXIX.

ABISHAG THE SHUNAMMITE NOURISHES DAVID.

1 Kings i. 1-5.

THE subject of this chapter may seem to some to be of too delicate a nature to be brought under notice. Let us reflect on the words of David himself, that to the pure all things are pure. We have already, in treating of Amnon and Tamar, partly stated our views upon this point. The present subject differs widely indeed from that which we then considered. This relation, in its literal sense, supplies no moral lesson sufficient to justify us in making it a subject of reflection. It is because it contains a higher and more instructive sense that it is brought under consideration. Yet it may be well to observe that neither in this nor in any other part of the inspired Word is there anything, however delicate, that is really impure. It is a just remark of our Expositor, in speaking of the difference between the Song of Solomon and the books of the Divine Word itself, that "in the literal sense of the Canticles, many indecent things occur, which is not the case with the books which are called Moses and the prophets." But whatever may be our views respecting the literal sense of some parts of even Moses and the prophets, we know that their inner sense, of which the letter is but the vehicle, is pure and holy; and one advantage of being aware, not only that they contain a spiritual sense, but of what that sense is, has a tendency to withdraw the mind from the mere natural image, and fix it on the higher reality, which it was designed to be the means of bringing down to our apprehension.

The active and eventful life of David, through which we have followed him, now draws near its close. Youthful and ruddy, brave and powerful as he was when we first beheld him, he is now old and stricken in years, and his natural warmth has almost departed with his vital energy. Life has ebbed so low that the common artificial means for retaining the warmth of the body are found unavailing: "they covered

him with clothes, but he gat no heat." In this extremity his servants suggested a means, frequently adopted in ancient times, to impart both warmth and vigour to his now enfeebled and aged frame. There is however something in the tenor of this suggestion sufficient to awaken our attention to the circumstances, recorded as they are in a book written by Divine inspiration, as certainly including more than appears on the surface of the narrative. Why was it necessary that the cherisher of the king should be a young virgin? And why, if the fire of life was sinking so fast, should all the coasts of Israel be sought to find a fair vestal who might watch it and exert herself to keep it alive? If to cherish and minister to the king were all that was required, the royal harem might have supplied abundant means for that purpose.

The truth is, the whole circumstances were typical or representative. David represented the Lord, and Abishag the Shunammite represented the Church. David was about to die, to be succeeded by his son Solomon. A life and a reign of warfare, in which the enemies of Israel had been subdued, are to be followed by a life and reign of settled peace and unexampled prosperity. In the first we may see a type of the life of our Lord in the flesh, when, by His conflicts with the spiritual enemies of His Church, He made His foes His footstool; in the second we may see a type of the life of the Lord in His risen humanity, when He truly reigns as the Prince of Peace, and His kingdom is enriched with the spoil of His enemies and the treasures of redeeming love. One of the objects to be accomplished by our Lord's coming into the world was the raising up of a new Church, and this new Church, in its youthfulness, purity, and beauty, was represented by the young and fair Abishag; the reciprocation of the Divine love and truth, which is one of the highest functions and one of the most distinctive characteristics of the true Church, being, with equal fidelity, represented by her cherishing the king and ministering unto him.

Under this general view of the subject there are several particulars which serve for confirmation and illustration.

Death, literally the end of our existence in this world and the beginning of our existence in another, is spiritually the close of one state of regeneration and the commencement of another. "Old and stricken in years" expresses the ripeness of the voluntary and intellectual life for the approaching change; for then vitality begins to recede from the external, that this may be laid aside, to be succeeded by another life, of greater purity, sensibility, and energy. This is the Divine law of progression. And that event which we call death is only one of the effects of a law which is universal and constant, and the more striking because to us it is more distinctly marked. Death is a less important

change than many others that we pass through, which make much less impression upon us. Death changes the scene of our existence, but does not alter the state of our life. It clothes us with a spiritual body in place of the material one that is left behind; but the soul is the same in the one as it was in the other. The changes that are effected by progressive regeneration are changes of state. They are the putting off of old principles and the putting on of new. When those which served the purposes of a body, as being instrumental means for the manifestation of the powers of the mind, have performed their use, they fall like leaves from the tree in autumn, not however without having first shown signs of decay. The diminution of heat causes the sap to recede from the extreme parts, and the chilling frosts complete the work of temporary destruction.

In all such changes there are two forces at work, one acting from within and the other acting from without. Apparently there is but one. It appears as if the vernal and summer heat were the cause of vegetation, and as if the vital heat of the body were the cause of life. But the primary cause of both vegetable and animal life is that one universal life which enters from God into all created things. The heat of the sun of nature only acts upon the external of things, and disposes it to yield to the influence of the sun of heaven, which constantly operates from within; and it is this truly and only vital force which causes all things to live and grow. In spring and summer nature reacts *with* this vital force, and hence all things bud and blossom, and rejoice; in autumn and especially winter nature reacts *against* this force, and therefore all things languish, and wither, and die. In man's case it is similar; nor was it different with the Lord Himself when in the flesh. The Divine acted from within, the human reacted from without. In the spring and summer of the Church, the love of the human race re-acted with the active love of God, and the Church enjoyed prosperity and brought forth fruits of holiness. But when the love of men waxed cold, the Divine love, though still acting from within, could no longer bring itself into outward manifestation in the affections and lives of men.

This state is described in the letter of the Word as if God Himself had withdrawn His love from the Church; for when the Church has driven away the love of God from herself, she imagines that God has ceased to love her. Natural heat is the emblem of love. And when David, in his old age, even when they covered him with clothes, gat no heat, he but represented the state of the Lord in the world when there was no true love in the Church to re-act with, or to reciprocate, His own Divine love. Clothes, or coverings for the body, are emblematical of truths for the mind; for truths clothe good as garments cover the body. But the clothes with which they covered David

represented truths without good, or faith without love. In these there is no virtue, no power of calling forth the Divine love into vital action in the Church or in the human mind. And such was the state of the Jewish Church when the Lord was in the world, and especially when He was about to pass out of the world. The Jews possessed the Word, and were acquainted and conversant with the truths which it contained; but they had not the love of God in them. The truths with which they were acquainted availed them nothing. These truths were like the leaves upon the fig-tree, which was yet cursed for its barrenness; or like the purple and fine linen upon the rich man, which served but to make his degradation the greater.

When the Lord could get no love from the Jewish Church He turned to the Gentiles; and He found among them what no longer existed amongst the Jews—sincerity, simplicity, and affection. The Christian Church which the Lord raised up among the Gentiles was represented by Abishag the Shunammite. The Jewish Church, even in its best state, had never been more than a representative Church, which, compared with a real spiritual Church, is little more than the garments or clothes that cover the body compared to the living body itself. But when that Church became corrupted, it was like a filthy garment, to which in the prophets it is compared. The Church, in its true state, is compared to a woman, the bride and wife of the Lord. The youth, the virginity, the beauty of Abishag make her a fit representative of the Christian Church, which was new, and pure, and fair; differing not only from the Jewish Church, but from all previous Churches, in its having a principle of youthfulness, purity, and moral beauty, derived from that new fountain of all spiritual life, the Humanity of the Lord, the Saviour and Redeemer, of a different character and of a more enduring kind than either the ancient or the most ancient Church possessed.

They sought a fair damsel throughout all the coasts of Israel, and found Abishag, a Shunammite, and brought her to the king.

This is not the only instance in which a Shunammite ministered to the Lord's representatives during the Old Testament dispensation. It was a Shunammite woman who constrained Elisha, on a day that he passed to Shunem, to eat bread; and who with her husband made for him a little chamber in the wall, and set for him a bed, and a table, and a candlestick. It was to this hospitable Shunammite that the prophet, for all her care, gave the promise of a son, and whose son he restored to life, when he had been struck down while he was with his father's reapers in the field. In this instance also the Shunammitish woman typified the Church among the Gentiles, her barrenness representing that state in which the nations were before the Lord came into the world and brought them to the knowledge of the

truth, and entered into a covenant with them. Then was the barren woman made to keep house, and to become a joyful mother of children. And when the manchild of true doctrine, which had been born of and gladdened the Church, died in the harvest—the consummation of the age, when the angels were sent forth as reapers—the Lord restored it to life again, inspiring the Church with still purer joy and more profound reverence and gratitude (2 Kings iv.).

Although David no doubt took Abishag to him as a wife, yet she became, as a virgin, really the wife of Solomon, no doubt to represent that it was not till the Lord had died and risen again, and had been fully glorified, that the Church really became the wife of the Lamb. It was not indeed till the day of Pentecost that the covenant of the Lord with His Church was fully ratified. Hitherto, as the Lord Himself had taught His disciples, He, as the Spirit of light and life, had dwelt *with* them; it was only now that He was *in* them. It was expedient for them that He should go away, that He might send them another Comforter that should abide with them for ever. This Spirit was poured out upon them when they were assembled together with one accord in one place. And then was the marriage of the Lord and His Church consummated; and the apostles went forth in the power of the Spirit to carry the Gospel to them that sat in darkness and in the shadow of death.

There was another reason for this circumstance. Abishag the Shunammite represented the celestial Church. And as Solomon represented the Lord as to the celestial principle, and, in the secondary sense, the celestial man, therefore she could not be actually united to David, and become united to Solomon.

The history of David and the Shunammite, like every other part of the Word, treats of the Church in particular as well as of the Church in general. The Lord is in every true member of His Church as well as among the whole body of the faithful. And in every regenerate mind those changes take place which passed upon the Lord and the Church while He was engaged in working out the great deliverance of mankind in human redemption. Without entering into the particulars of this remarkable, and, we may justly assert, mystical narrative, we may learn from it that it is not by faith and truth only, but by love and goodness, that we can preserve the Lord's life in our souls. The warmth of heavenly and Divine love cannot be supported within us without our cherishing it and ministering unto it. The Divine love as it is in itself is ever the same. Widely different is it in us, according as, with different degrees of faithfulness, we cherish and reciprocate it; or make it the object of a formal faith or verbal exaltation. We must search through all the coasts of Israel, through the whole spiritual mind, till we find a spiritual affection so tender, so pure, so

fair as to be fit to be brought to the king—the Divine truth in the mind—that it may nourish and minister unto it, so as to make it in us the truth of love—the power of God unto salvation.

CHAPTER XXX.

ADONIJAH'S REBELLION.

1 *Kings* i. 5-31.

THE near prospect of David's death gave rise to that serious calamity which is incident to kingdoms in certain conditions—a disputed succession. Absalom had attempted to dethrone his father during his lifetime, and Adonijah, anticipating the time of his father's death, now endeavours to secure the throne, which he knew was designed for Solomon. This act of Adonijah not only divides the house of David, but ranges the leading men of the kingdom into two parties hostile to each other, and leads to the death of some of the most eminent and active of David's servants and supporters, and among them of the renowned general of his army, Joab the son of Zeruiah. These fatal and fearful results of their rising in favour of Adonijah are mentioned, not simply as the reward of their present crime, but as a retribution for deeds long past, but neither forgotten nor forgiven. This subject, almost too large in itself and too multifarious in its particulars to be taken in at one view, must yet, to prevent our exceeding reasonable limits, be compressed if possible into one chapter.

Regarding the kingdom of Israel as representative of the kingdom of the Lord—of that kingdom especially as spoken of by the Lord Himself when He said, "Behold, the kingdom of God is within you"—we are led at once to place the present history before us as containing some spiritual instruction interesting and useful to us as beings whose chief business it is to live for eternity. Considered apart from revelation, the principles of a sound, though not necessarily of a profound philosophy, enable us to see that history is a projection of the state of human nature. In the conduct and economy of men in their collective capacity, we can read with some degree of certainty the state of the human heart, without presuming to decide on individual states and eternal consequences, which are known to God only. There are, no doubt, important differences between profane and sacred history. Sacred history equally with secular exhibits the state of human nature; and displays, often in painful and humiliating lessons, the corruptions of the human heart. But it shows us these

in a way which not only fits us to judge of the general state of the human mind, but which directs us to look, and enables us to see, into our own hearts individually, and to learn how they may be changed from their natural and worldly to a spiritual and heavenly state. The natural events which are recorded actually correspond to spiritual events in the history of our own inward spiritual experience. And yet those outward events themselves were not determined by any arbitrary decree or compulsory control. They were in harmony with the invariable laws and operations of Divine Providence, which leave the freedom of the human will untouched. Yet volition and action are acted upon providentially in a thousand ways, which leads men themselves freely to choose what they resolve and do. The inspired record also is so framed, and the incidents are so selected, as to form the receptacle of spiritual truth, which may be derived from it by the law of analogy or correspondence.

In treating of David and Abishag the Shunammite, we endeavoured to trace the analogy principally in relation to the Lord and His Church, whom David and Abishag represented. The present subject equally relates to the Lord and to His Church or kingdom. As in the case of Absalom's rebellion, which has already been considered, so in the case of Adonijah's revolt, we see the nature of the temptations which the Lord suffered in working out the redemption of His creatures. These temptations arose immediately out of the frailty of the humanity which He took upon Him, and which He took for the very purpose of being tempted, that He might overcome the tempter—the tempter being Satan and the devil, or the whole powers of darkness. But the ultimate end of our Lord in suffering and overcoming was to succour those who suffer, that they also may overcome. To us, therefore, and to all who enter on the life of heaven do these historical circumstances refer; for the servant is not greater than his lord, neither is he that is sent greater than him that sent him. “If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, much more shall they call them of his household.”

Our Lord, in speaking of the necessary effects of the principles of the Gospel, declared that He came not to send peace on earth, but a sword; for He had come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against the mother, and the daughter-in-law against the mother-in-law; and that a man's foes should be they of his own household. When the Lord told His disciples and the people that He came to sow division and to make a man's household his foes, He pointed out the spiritual results of the reception of the principles of Christianity in creating division in the mind between the old man with his carnal lusts and the new man with his spiritual affections. When the Lord said that He came not to send peace on earth He alluded to the effect

which would be produced in the natural mind, which is meant by the earth, in stirring up that conflict between good and evil, truth and error, by which evil and error are cast out, and good and truth are confirmed ; and the Lord's kingdom comes, and His will is done on earth as it is in heaven.

The type or ensample of this condition of the Christian mind which is presented in the present conduct of Adonijah is to be considered as part of the realization of the judgment pronounced on David for his sin in the matter of Bathsheba, the mother of Solomon, that the sword should never depart from his house, and that out of his own house the Lord would raise up enmity against him. These foes of his own household are the principles of the natural mind that are indisposed to submit to the rule of those of the spiritual, and are ever ready to usurp the authority which Divine truth and Divine order award to the higher and purer principles that belong to the new kingdom which the Lord establishes in the souls of the faithful. Adonijah, who attempted to usurp the power which he knew was intended for Solomon, must be considered as representing a principle in the mind which is the opposite of that which Solomon himself represented. As however Adonijah and Absalom are mentioned in connection in the sacred history, and as their crimes were of a somewhat similar character, the one having rebelled against his father and the other against his brother, though Solomon was not yet king, the nature of the evil which the attempt of the second son of David represented may be more clearly seen by comparing it with that which was made by the first.

In the beginning of this chapter, in describing Adonijah and his attempt to seize the throne, it is said at the 6th verse that "he was a very goodly man ; and his mother bare him after Absalom." Of the six sons born unto David in Hebron, "the third was Absalom the son of Maacah the daughter of Talmai king of Geshur ; and the fourth, Adonijah the son of Haggith." From these particulars and from their general history we learn, that they were both born while David remained in Hebron ; that they were both beautiful in person ; that they were born in nearest succession ; that they were both fondly loved by their father ; and that they both rose up against him, the one against his person, the other against his sovereign will. The sons born to David in Hebron represented the principles that are produced while the regenerating man is in an external state, and which have their residence in the external or natural mind. And as Solomon was born unto David after his removal to Jerusalem, he represented a principle produced in the mind when the regenerating man has advanced to an internal state, and having its residence in the internal man. These sons born in Hebron being six in number,

represent also, like the six days of labour that precede the seventh of rest, states of temptation and conflict, while Solomon, the seventh son, represents that state of rest and peace which exists when the warfare of the spiritual life is accomplished. Now as the natural mind is opposed to the spiritual mind, and is not only impatient of its rule but is desirous to rule over it, this is the general ground and reason of the attempted usurpation both of Absalom and Adonijah. The rebellions of Absalom and Adonijah, while they have the same general representative character—both representing the rebellion of the external man against the government and dominion of the internal—yet have that difference which is always involved in two acts that have the same general character. One represents opposition to the government of truth, the other opposition to the government of goodness. This is further indicated by the representative character of the distinct government of those against whom Absalom and Adonijah rebelled. The kingdom under David represented the government of truth in the mind, and the kingdom under Solomon represented the government of good in the mind. The rebellion of Absalom represented, therefore, opposition and hostility to the government of Divine truth, and that of Adonijah represented opposition and hostility to the government of Divine goodness.

In the economy of salvation and in the order of the Divine government this principle is ever operating either potentially or actually, that the first shall be last and the last first. The principles that are first acquired, and which have at first the ascendancy, are designed and destined, if regeneration proceeds, to become the last, and yield to the ascendancy of principles acquired in a more perfect state of the religious life. This inversion of state is not effected without internal conflict; and often does it require a long and painful struggle in the mind, and with ourselves, before it is accomplished. How long and tenaciously do we often cling to early impressions and opinions, prejudices and habits, even after we have formed inward principles that are subversive of them. In every state, too, when a change is to take place in our habits and pursuits and our very enjoyments, there is always time spent and difficulty experienced in obtaining emancipation from the dominion of the one, and bringing ourselves quietly and happily to submit to the government of the other. We have an early example in the weaned child, so expressively used in Scripture to describe the experience of the child of God becoming weaned from self and the world. How passionately does young and tender nature rebel against the power that remove it from under the dominion of one set of tastes and habits and enjoyments to another. Another trial and sometimes another conflict awaits the young denizen of this changing but progressive life in the transition from amusement to

study, from the dominion of the parent to that of the teacher. In every transition period and state of life it is the same. There are always difficulties and repugnances to be overcome—always a tendency to carry the old feelings and habits into the new sphere of action, and not unfrequently a conflict ensues between the old and the new. The difference of the two is sometimes so great that the result is opposite in different persons. Some, for example, who enter on the business of life, seem to find it so difficult to change the habit and the mode to which they have been accustomed, that they fail of success for want of application, while others, who overcome them and enter with delight and industry into their new duties, go forward with satisfaction and profit. If this is the case in natural life, much more must it be the case in spiritual life. These changes are of such a nature that they bring into conflict principles and feelings and thoughts and habits that are as opposite to each other as time and eternity, the world and heaven, the flesh and the spirit. These in fallen man are opposite and conflicting; and the lower are desirous to have dominion over the higher. Their influence over us is naturally great. The world seems to us to be beautiful, and everything connected with its enjoyments and its prospects seems fair, before any spiritual affections have been awakened in the mind. This is the case not only generally, but particularly. In every particular state on which we enter in passing through the regenerate life, there are opposite affections and thoughts brought into action that have never been active in relation to each other before. There are natural tendencies that come into actual development that have never before been subjected to the scrutiny, and have never been opposed by the principles, of the spiritual mind. Adonijah had never been displeased by his father at any time, by his saying to him, *Why hast thou done so?* Naturally, this does not bespeak wisdom, though it indicates tenderness, or rather fondness, in the father, and may help to account for the son's want of respect for his father's will. Spiritually it signifies that, during the previous states of regeneration, the principle represented by Adonijah had never come under the scrutiny of the internal man, as a principle having in it anything in opposition to himself. And now it comes into manifestation, and shows itself in acts of open hostility. It draws also into connection with itself principles which had previously been active on the side of order. Joab went after Adonijah, though he had not gone after Absalom. Absalom's rebellion was opposition offered to the rule of truth; Adonijah's was opposition offered to the rule of good. That which submits to the rule of one may not submit to that of the other. And whenever the rule of love, which is the rule of goodness, is in its commencement, there must be resistance from affections and thoughts, and therefore also from lower and apparent goods and truths, which, though suited

to the wants and conditions of a spiritual, are not suited to those of a celestial state.

We may learn, then, from the history of Adonijah that in the regeneration there are changes of state which act upon the inmost principles of our spiritual life ; but are so overruled by a wise and merciful God as to bring everlasting benefit to those who love and serve Him.

BOOK III.

THE REIGN OF SOLOMON.

CHAPTER I.

SOLOMON ANOINTED KING.

1 *Kings* i. 32-40.

SOLOMON commenced his reign under peculiar circumstances. Had there been no disturbing element in the house or the kingdom of David, when he slept with his fathers, Solomon his son would have peacefully ascended the vacant throne. But the Divine judgment, which David had brought upon himself, "The sword shall never depart from thine house," followed the king even to his dying-bed, and embittered his latest hours. Adonijah, the eldest son, knowing his younger brother had been chosen as his father's successor, anticipated the time of Solomon's accession, and had himself proclaimed king. 'It was to defeat this usurpation and crush the rising rebellion that by David's command Solomon was hastily raised to the dignity of the regal office. "Zadok the priest, and Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and the Cherethites, and the Pelethites, went down, and caused Solomon to ride upon king David's mule, and brought him to Gihon. And Zadok the priest took an horn of oil out of the tabernacle, and anointed Solomon. And they blew the trumpet ; and all the people said, God save king Solomon."

This sudden and unexpected counterplot, as it may be called, carried consternation into the whole body of the conspirators, and the conspiracy at once collapsed. Adonijah had slain sheep and oxen and fat cattle, and had invited all his brethren the king's sons, and all the men of Judah the king's servants ; but Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah, and the mighty men, and Solomon his brother, he called not. They had not yet risen from the feast when the music and the shouts of the people who followed the new king in his progress broke upon their ears. For as Solomon rode upon the king's mule, "all the people came up after him, and the people piped with pipes, and rejoiced with great joy, so that the earth rent with the sound of them. And Adonijah and all the guests that were with him heard it as they had made an end of eating." When these sounds found an

interpreter in Jonathan the son of Abiathar the priest, who came in and told Adonijah that king David had made Solomon king; "all the guests that were with Adonijah were afraid, and rose up, and went every man his way;" and Adonijah himself, fearing Solomon, "arose, and went, and caught hold on the horns of the altar." Thus ended an attempt to subvert the kingdom, aided by so astute and brave a general as Joab and supported by the priest Abiathar.

These events we are to regard as having a higher import than that of mere history.

It is a circumstance deserving remark, and not without a higher meaning, that, as David was anointed king before the death of Saul, so Solomon was anointed king before the death of David. Thus the natural, the spiritual, and the celestial, while perfectly distinct, run into each other, like the different colours of the rainbow. For each produces, by its connection with the other, a middle principle that partakes of the nature of both; and this middle principle forms the uniting medium between them. For it is a universal law, that no two things which are discretely distinct can be united but by means of a third that partakes of the nature of both. This is true of the three degrees of the human mind, of the three heavens, and of the three senses of the Word.

Those circumstances which, like the usurpation of Adonijah, form no part of, but are, on the contrary, opposed to the established order of things, are not to be regarded as merely accidental, but as arising out of the disorder which underlies the existing order. The kingdom itself in Israel arose out of disorder. The demand of the Israelites to have a king involved the rejection of the Lord as their King. Their demand was complied with as a lesser evil to prevent a greater. For the evil that produced the cry was that also which required the remedy. The evil that gave rise to their demand manifested itself also in the kings and the kingdom they had chosen. So that the untoward events that happen are to be regarded as outbirths of the state which existed amongst them. Yet as the manifestations of evil are, as far as possible, overruled for good, by that Providence which sees the end from the beginning, so in the present case was the usurpation of Adonijah made to contribute to the stability of Solomon's throne. This it helped to do in two ways. It brought into open manifestation the character of the disloyal who would have weakened the kingdom, and evoked the good feelings of the loyal who maintained it. If it hastened the time of Solomon's accession to the throne, this was but one of the effects produced by the general cause out of which the usurpation of Adonijah arose. And all these are shadows of states and events in the history of our Lord Himself, as the antitype both of David and Solomon, and against whose government all opposing

elements were permitted to come into ultimate manifestation, that they might be overcome, and removed out of the way, so that His kingdom, as represented by that of Solomon, the peaceable, might be one of settled peace.

When David gave the command that Solomon should be made king, he commissioned Zadok the priest, and Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, to take the leading part in the ceremonial. These represented the celestial, spiritual, and natural principles into which, as well as by which, he was to be inaugurated.

They were first to cause Solomon to ride upon king David's own mule, which itself was a sign of the transference of the kingdom from the father to the son. But this was not a mere transference, but an exaltation. The rational, which had been subject to the spiritual, was now to be made subject to the celestial.

They were next to take him down to Gihon, and there anoint and proclaim him king. Regarded in its historical sense, it is considered that this was a precautionary measure. Gihon was near Jerusalem, and is supposed to have been on the opposite side of the city to that in which Adonijah had been proclaimed, and where he and his party were assembled. The spiritual reason is to be sought in the representative character of the place itself. Gihon derived its name from the "breaking forth" of a stream; which is not mentioned again, except in the Second Book of Chronicles, where it is said that Hezekiah stopped the upper watercourse of Gihon, and brought it straight down to the west side of the city of David (xxxii. 30); and that he built a wall without the city of David, on the west side of Gihon, in the valley (xxxiii. 14). But besides its name and these indications of its character, we have a guide to its spiritual meaning in the circumstance that Gihon is the name of one of the four heads into which the river was parted that went out from Eden to water the garden (Gen. ii. 13). These four branches of the river of the water of life signify the finite streams into which the ever-flowing river of Divine Wisdom is parted, when it enters the domain of finite intelligence, in heaven and the Church, and comes to the apprehension of angels and men. The first river is goodness and truth, and the second is the knowledge of all that relates to goodness and truth; and these two belong to the internal man: the third river is reason, and the fourth is knowledge; and these belong to the external man. Gihon was the second river, and therefore signifies the knowledge of goodness and truth, as it is in the internal man. And when we know that Eden signified the celestial man, whose state is described by Eden and all that belonged to it, we can see the reason why Solomon, the peaceful and the wise, the celestial man among the kings of Israel, should go to Gihon to be anointed king.

There is also a speciality mentioned respecting the oil with which he was anointed. The priest took a horn of oil out of the tabernacle and anointed Solomon. In the two previous anointings there is nothing said about the oil being taken from the tabernacle. The mention of it here connects the holy oil with the holy place, and thus connects it with the sanctuary, where the Divine Presence dwelt. The tabernacle also represented the celestial Church, and the worship of the Lord from the holy principle of love.

When they had anointed Solomon they blew the trumpet. The trumpet was used among the Jews, as amongst other nations, to give forth the sound of alarm or of triumph. It was employed in their religious as well as in their state ceremonials, and is associated with the supernatural as well as with natural agencies and events of Scripture. The first time we read of the trumpet in the Bible is on mount Sinai at the giving of the law, when "there were thunders, and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud" (Exod. xix. 16). As at the beginning of the Mosaic, so at the end of the first Christian dispensation. In the end of the world, or consummation of the age, the Son of Man "shall send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds" (Matt. xxiv. 31). The voice of the trumpet, in these instances, is evidently a sign or symbol of Divine truth, the promulgation of which makes both an end and a beginning, but more especially a beginning, by gathering together from the old the elements that are to form the commencement of the new. The trumpet was used in the Israelitish Church more particularly for calling their holy assemblies. In the general sense, these represented the united consent of the members of the Church to the teaching of Divine truth, and their united action in the worship or service of the Lord: in the individual sense, they represented the united consent of all the thoughts and affections of the mind to the teaching of the Word, and their united action in words of truth and works of righteousness.

The sound of the trumpet after the anointing, as the voice of truth after the influence of love, was the signal for the people to shout, Let king Solomon live, translated into our popular cry of God save the king. The simultaneous cry of the people is the consent of all the common affections and thoughts to the government of the truth which Solomon represented, the truth of wisdom. This is higher than the truth of intelligence, which was represented by David. The truth which David represented is that which teacheth the hands to war and the fingers to fight, and which carries on the warfare against the yet unsubdued evils of the corrupt selfhood. The truth represented by Solomon is that which speaks comfortably to Jerusalem, and cries unto her that her warfare is accomplished, and through which the Lord

speaks peace to His people and to His saints ; for mercy and truth are met together, and righteousness and peace have kissed each other.

Not only did the multitude acknowledge Solomon as their king, but "all the people came up after him" on his way to Jerusalem, and no doubt in his triumphal entry into it. This following, like the disciples and the multitude following Jesus, represented following practically the teaching and example set before them, which the people have in the Lord, of whom Solomon was the type. The people who followed Solomon piped with pipes and rejoiced with great joy, so that the earth rent with the sound of them. Pipes, like all wind instruments, are symbols of celestial affections, as stringed instruments are of spiritual affections. In wind instruments, such as these pipes, the human voice itself speaks, so that there is more of life in the sounds produced by them, than in those produced by simply mechanical means. There is also a distinction between joy and gladness similar to that between wind and string instruments, joy being expressive of celestial, and gladness of spiritual, affection. To rejoice with great joy is to feel and express the delight of life which springs from the highest affections of the heart, which are the affections of love to God. So powerful were the demonstrations of joy that the earth rent with the sound of them. This is considered to be a figurative expression, but as all the figures of Scripture are correspondences, the rending of the earth has more than a figurative meaning. The earth is the natural mind, as heaven is the spiritual mind. When the prophet says, "Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth," he calls not only heaven and earth, or angels and men, to bear witness to the truth of the words he is about to utter, but he calls upon every member of the Church to hearken, both spiritually and naturally, from all temporal and eternal considerations, to the words of Divine truth. The rending of the earth is not expressed by the same word as the rending of the garments, nor does it express the same idea. It means cleft, laid open, sometimes for the purpose of destruction, as when the earth *clave* asunder, and swallowed up Korah and his company (Num. xvi. 31) ; but also for the coming forth of life, as in the promise, "Then shall thy light *break forth* as the morning" (Isa. lviii. 8). The rending of the earth was a happy event, being an effect of the people's rejoicing ; and signifies, therefore, the responsive opening of the natural mind to receive and reciprocate the inward spiritual joy which the beginning of the reign of love awakens in the heart. In the case of Korah we have an awful image of the state of man, when all celestial and spiritual affections sink down into the natural mind, which greedily opens its mouth to receive them, and which swallows them up and destroys them ; while in the case of Solomon, we have the opposite state expressed, though not literally represented, of the natural mind opening, as it actually

does, to admit the heavenly influences that descend into it whenever it yields a willing submission to the laws of love and truth.

When Solomon was seated on the throne of the kingdom, the king's servants came to bless their lord, king David, saying, "God make the name of Solomon better than thy name, and make his throne greater than thy throne. And the king bowed himself upon the bed." The name and the throne of Solomon were greater than those of David, as the celestial is greater than the spiritual, as love to God is greater than love to man, although the less is like unto the greater. When his servants told him, David bowed himself on his bed. A similar act is recorded of Jacob, when Joseph had sworn to carry out his father's desire to bury him, not in Egypt, but in Canaan. Jacob is said to have bowed himself upon the head of his bed; David upon the bed. David speaks of his bed in an evidently mystical sense where he says, "I will not come into the tabernacle of my house, nor go up into the couch of my bed, until I find out a place for the Lord, an habitation for the mighty God of Jacob" (Ps. cxxx. 3, 5). The tabernacle of his house is the holy principle of love, and the couch of his bed is the truth which is from that love in the natural mind, into which men could not enter or ascend until the coming of the Lord, and which no one can now enter or ascend until the Lord has found a place in the heart, and the Mighty One of Jacob a habitation in the mind. When, therefore, David bowed himself upon his bed, he gave an outward symbolic sign of the consent of the mind to the supremacy of the principle of goodness in the heart, as the throne where the Lord sits, and whence He exercises His dominion, in those who acknowledge and worship Him as love itself and wisdom itself. In the three instances we have here mentioned the bed is expressed by three different terms, as expressive of the natural mind in its three different states, when it is the support of natural, of spiritual, or of celestial truth and goodness. Jacob's bed answers to the first of these, and David's to the second; the bed into which David resolved not to go up answers to the third; for this resolve was not accomplished in David but in Solomon, who found a place for the Lord when he built the temple, at the dedication of which he quotes this psalm, as having then received its accomplishment.

Besides bowing himself upon his bed, David said, "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, which hath given one to sit on my throne this day, mine eyes even seeing it." Not only with the affection of his will, but with the perception of his understanding did David acknowledge the blessing which the Lord God of Israel had bestowed upon the kingdom by the elevation of Solomon to the throne. To bless the Lord is to acknowledge Him as the Author of our blessings. And the blessing which is the ground of David's thanksgiving is the establishment of

that order of the religious life, when we see with the eye of faith the exaltation of the grace of love, and our heart is raised in gratitude to the Divine Giver of all good for having brought it to pass in His own time and in His own way. This day includes the state of things represented by all the circumstances existing at the time in the kingdom of Israel. A state of exaltation may arise out of a state of humiliation, a state of safety out of a state of danger, a state of peace out of a state of tribulation. Such was the condition of things when Solomon was raised to the throne of David, giving us the promise that "all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose."

The first act of Solomon, as the king of Israel, was one worthy of his kingly character. Adonijah clung to the horns of the altar until Solomon, whom he now acknowledged to be king, should swear that he would not slay him with the sword. Solomon said, "If he will show himself a worthy man, there shall not an hair of him fall to the earth: but if wickedness shall be found in him, he shall die. So king Solomon sent, and they brought him down from the altar. And he came and bowed himself to king Solomon: and Solomon said unto him, Go to thine house." Divine pardon is not unconditional, and clemency is not exercised without regard to character and conduct. Worthiness secures life, wickedness brings condemnation and death. The Lord delighteth in mercy; and these acts of clemency which His creatures perform are but the shadow of those which He is continually doing to the penitents, however grievously they have sinned against Him.

CHAPTER II.

DAVID'S DYING CHARGE TO SOLOMON, AND HIS DEATH.

1 Kings ii. 5-10.

IF anything were required to convince us that the Old Testament worthies were not all saints, though they were all representatives of saints, the deathbed scene of David would be sufficient for that purpose. We need not point out wherein his dying charge to Solomon differed in spirit as well as in act from what that of a dying Christian would be, were it given under similar circumstances. Much less need we contrast it with the spirit which was manifested by the Lord when He prayed on the cross for His enemies. To die as well as to live in charity with all men is a requirement of Christianity. David was not a Christian, though an eminent type of Christ, and we are

not to expect, or at least we are not to require, of him Christian perfection. He is not to be judged by a Christian standard. It is not necessary, indeed it is not lawful, for us to judge him as to his essential spiritual state at all. But it is highly necessary to be guarded against the opinion, that because David is called a man after God's own heart, everything he did without Divine reproof may be reconciled with the character of a holy Christian man.

Grateful may we be for the light which the coming of the Son of Man in His glory has shed upon the sacred page, especially where it records such instances of human frailty. Precious would that light be were it only for the discrimination which it enables us to make between the type and the antitype, and, generally, between the letter and the spirit of the Scriptures, so far as to preserve us from both of those grievous errors—the justification of wrong because done by some who are called the people of God, and the rejection of the Bible because it seems to sanction it. But far more precious is that light seen to be when, besides giving us this discriminating light, it discovers to us, as objects of spiritual discernment, interior truths that reveal the nature of our own inner life, and display the wisdom of God in the process of our regeneration. To such high and holy subjects does every part of the Sacred Scriptures relate. The deathbed scene of David, and the execution of his sanguinary will by Solomon, when that light from heaven falls upon them, dissolve away, and are succeeded by scenes in which life and immortality take the place of death and destruction. For death and destruction in regard to the spiritual life, in an advancing state of regeneration, are but the removal of old things that have served their purpose and completed their use, in a previous and inferior stage of spiritual progression, that new and higher things may take their place. This, it may appear, is the general truth representatively taught in the rather singular circumstances of Abiathar the priest and Joab the captain of the host—the two highest officers, one in the sacred and the other in military affairs of the kingdom—being retained in office during the whole of the reign of David, notwithstanding the hereditary judgment that rested on the one and the personal criminality that rested on the other.

Abiathar was one of the descendants of Eli, against whose house it had been declared, that its iniquity should not be purged with sacrifice nor offering for ever. The sentence of extirpation on the house of Eli may be considered as having been carried out to a great extent in the time of Saul, though not completely till the time of Solomon. Ahimelech, of the house of Eli, who was priest in the time of Saul, was slain, among fourscore and five persons that wore a linen ephod, because he had supplied David with bread and the sword of Goliath out of the sanctuary, when he fled from the persecuting wrath of his

father-in-law. On that occasion a circumstance occurred too frequently mentioned in the Scriptures to be considered accidental or without a meaning. Abiathar, one of the sons of Ahimelech, escaped the slaughter of the priests of Nob, and, as the only remnant of the house of Eli, fled after David, by whom he was received with affection, and afterwards made high priest. And this office he continued to hold till he joined Adonijah in his attempt to obtain the throne, for which he was thrust out by Solomon.

Viewing the rejection of Abiathar from the priesthood as the remote consequence of a judgment which the conduct of Eli had brought upon his whole house, we are to understand it as teaching an important lesson respecting the course of evil as a principle in ourselves. In those who have entered on the regenerate life, judgment comes to be pronounced upon their evils; and if they continue to progress in that life, those evils will, in accordance with that judgment, assuredly die out or cease to rule. As this is the spiritual meaning involved in these Divine judgments and their fulfilment, we must see that they are judgments of mercy, and that the execution of these judgments is a work of mercy. When, therefore, we read in the Scriptures of the Divine Being pronouncing judgment of rejection or extinction, which is only to be consummated in future times and generations, let us think, not of a Divine decree that punishes the sins of the fathers upon the children, or that entails a curse upon all the descendants of one offender, but of that wise and merciful economy by which it is provided that, with the faithful, evils that are seen and condemned by the light of Divine truth will gradually be exhausted and consumed, till not one remains or exercises any rule in the heart and mind.

But there is another phase of the subject respecting Abiathar, when the thrusting out of that descendant of the house of Eli from the priesthood is considered in connection with the installation of Zadok in his place. Abiathar was a descendant of Aaron, the first high priest of the Jews, through his younger son Ithamar, and Zadok was a descendant of Aaron through his eldest son Eleazar. And we have only to call to remembrance the significant history of Jacob and Esau to perceive the meaning of the elder for a time serving the younger, or being subordinate or inferior to him, till the elder, in the course of events, breaks the yoke of the younger from off his neck. For while the regenerate man acts from the understanding rather than from the will—from truth rather than from good—the younger has the first place; but when he comes to act from the will and from goodness, the first-born, who represents the principle of goodness, acquires the ascendant as his own true right. The ascendancy of truth during man's reformation is, however, as providential and necessary as the ascendancy of good when he is regenerated. Truth is the sword that combats,

good is the sceptre that rules. During the warlike reign of David a younger branch of the house of Aaron rules in sacerdotal affairs ; when Solomon begins his peaceful reign the eldest is invested with the robes of office as high priest of the Church.

The case of Joab is one of still more particular interest. The son of Zeruah, the sister of David, we see in him a representative of rational truth in relation to that which is spiritual, or of relative truth, as compared and connected with absolute truth. The inner man is perfected through mediums, and acts through instruments. Essential principles in the inner man act through secondary principles in the outer man. In regard to David and Joab, as standing in this relation to each other, David represents Divine truth such as it is in the spiritual sense of the Word, and in the spiritual mind of man. Joab represents Divine truth such as it is in the literal sense of the Word, and in the rational mind of man, which is natural truth rationally apprehended. We have already spoken of Joab as representing the rational mind, and therefore also the rational man. But when we speak of the rational man within the Church, we speak of him in relation to the principles of the Church, and therefore in relation to the Word, from which the principles of the Church are derived. Those who apprehend the Word naturally are those who believe it in simplicity, without reasoning on its teaching, being like children who have not yet learned comparison and judgment. Such as these never pervert the Scriptures, because they do not enter intellectually into their teaching. It is the rational man, who is not at the same time a spiritual man, that alone can be guilty of this serious evil. The rational man who is also spiritual, reasons on spiritual subjects from spiritual light ; but the rational man who is not spiritual, reasons on them from natural light. The rational faculty, like the letter of the Word, is a sword that turns every way, and may be used either to support or assail the cause of genuine truth, according as it acts under the influence of the spiritual mind, which is in the order of heaven, or of the natural mind, while it is yet under the yoke of self-love and the love of the world.

That Joab should sustain a representative character in which the truths of the written Word can have any share, when his crimes, especially that of deceitfully slaying a man more righteous than himself, were such as to cause David to utter the heaviest judgment against him and his house, is not more surprising than that David should represent the Lord as the Divine truth itself. Judas, as one of the Lord's disciples, had his share in representing what the disciples collectively represented, all the goods and truths of His Word. And yet Judas betrayed the Lord, and betrayed Him with a kiss. Nor was he even then acting out of his representative character. The Lord

cannot be betrayed out of the Church, nor where His Word is not known. It is only those who know Him that can betray Him, nor can they betray Him but by that very knowledge of which He is the Author and the Object. The Lord is betrayed when the truths of His Word are turned against Him ; and they are turned against Him when they are made to serve the ends of avarice, injustice, revenge. These are the enemies of God as well as of men ; and when they triumph by the perversion of truth, the Lord of truth and love is betrayed into the hands of sinners. When this is done deceitfully, the Lord is betrayed with a kiss. This is no doubt the consummation of all wickedness, and was permitted to be done to the Saviour to represent that He endured the greatest evil which fallen human nature could or ever can oppose to the purposes and operations of His saving mercy. The death of Judas and of Joab did not represent the extinction of that truth of which they were the types. Persons who are actually guilty of these evils destroy indeed all truth in themselves ; for, of all evils, that of holding the truth in unrighteousness, and using it deceitfully, enters most deeply into the human mind, and roots out most completely the germs of all that is good and true. The holiest truths and goods of the Church and of the Word cannot then avail to secure or preserve spiritual life ; as Joab was slain in the sanctuary, clinging to the horns of the altar. It was one of the laws delivered to Moses, "If a man come presumptuously upon his neighbour to slay him with guile, thou shalt take him from Mine altar, that he may die." And when the good of charity or the truth of faith is destroyed deceitfully, the holiest things of worship cannot save from spiritual death.

Considered as representing principles, the death of Joab represented the separation from holy truth of the profane principle which adhered to it from the corrupt mind of man. And in these and other cases where another takes the office, the new occupant represents a new principle—one more in accordance with the truth, and more capable of manifesting its nature and uses.

If the case of Joab is impressive, still more so is that of Shimei. It will be recollected that when David was fleeing from Absalom, who had rebelled against his father, Shimei, of the family of the house of Saul, "came forth, and cursed still as he came. And he cast stones at David, and at all the servants of David : and he said, Come out, thou bloody man, and thou man of Belial : the Lord hath returned upon thee all the blood of the house of Saul, in whose stead thou hast reigned." When urged by Abishai to allow him to take off his head, David rebuked him, and said, "So let him curse, because the Lord hath said unto him, Curse David." When, after the death of Absalom, the king was returning from the place of his retreat, Shimei came with the men of Judah to welcome and receive him : and confessing his

sin and craving forgiveness, David swore unto him that his life should be spared. In this pardon there were no conditions, there was no reservation. But in the solemn moments of a deathbed, ten years later, David charged Solomon to do what the oath alone, it would seem, prevented David himself from doing—to bring the hoar head of Shimei with blood to the grave. Naturally considered, all this might be perfectly consistent with Jewish notions of right and justice. Yet we cannot regard it as a part of the inspired Word of God without being satisfied that something is intended to be conveyed by it to the mind of the spiritual man that does not appear from the literal history.

Considered as a part of the history of man's regeneration, it is easy to perceive the general truth it was intended to convey. Shimei must represent a principle in the mind which rises up and assails it in states of trial and temptation, but which submits itself to the authority of the truth in times of prosperity; and which, though evil, cannot be removed till regeneration has attained a certain stage in its progress towards a state of perfection. The human mind, as the little world within, is like the great world without, in this as in all things else, that there are within it, in its imperfect state, those thoughts and feelings that are friends in prosperity and enemies in adversity, or that are obedient subjects when authority is established, but rebellious and insolent when that authority is shaken. If these ruling powers were to be overturned, or even brought into jeopardy, how many obedient and orderly citizens would break out into acts of contempt or violence. Even when these powers are in full operation, there be some that curse them in their hearts, and only want the outward occasion to curse them with their lips and in their lives—to cast at them the stones of violence and the dust of contumely.

In the spiritual affairs of the soul there is some considerable resemblance to this. In the earlier stage of the spiritual life there are thoughts and feelings that yield to the pressure of authority exerted by the truth which we have acknowledged as the law of life, but which show insubordination and violence when that pressure is removed. When we suffer we are often disposed to murmur, and are sometimes even tempted to break out into complaints against the wisdom and goodness of Providence.

Circumstances do not create these rebellious principles or increase their malignity, but they afford occasion or opportunity for their coming into open rebellion. Most conscientious persons have learned by experience that circumstances, especially those of trial and temptation, bring dispositions into activity which they hardly knew or could believe they possessed. Such circumstances as make us thus practically acquainted with ourselves are no doubt among the permissions of

an all-wise and good Providence, whose dispensations are not all present peace, but which permit the sword to pierce through the very soul. In the wars of this world how are the passions of men let loose! in the day of adversity how cruelly does the enemy triumph! In the wars of the spiritual life—those of the world within—there are not less startling revelations of the enormity of the evils that slumber in the human heart—evils that either never have been excited so as to be seen in their real malignity, or that rise up anew after they have been brought into some degree of subjection. It is a merciful as it is a wise provision in the economy of our Divine Saviour, that evils are not allowed to pass the bounds of possible restraint and final subjugation; and that they are only permitted to come into activity when we have the power to overcome them. “As thy day, so shall thy strength be.” “God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.” Evil, however effectually subdued, is never annihilated, but is removed from its central and commanding position in the mind to an outward and subordinate place. It is always, therefore, possible, while we live in this world, for evil to return to the place from which it has been cast out; and no doubt there is in every subdued evil an inherent inclination to throw off the yoke. The actual return of any evil to its original central place and to its original authority in the mind, would be to the individual a kind of second fall that would leave him far more wicked and degraded than the first. It would be his return, after the evil spirit had gone out of him, with seven other spirits more wicked than himself. This is a state of things that is to the utmost mercifully provided against. One of the means by which Divine wisdom and goodness secure the earnest mind against this calamity is, that no particular evil that has been completely overcome is ever likely to rise up and acquire dominion again. But evils are connected together like tribes and houses and families; and though one may be subdued, another may renew the assault. Saul, the bitter enemy of David, may be dead, but a Shimei, of the house and family of Saul, may come forth, and, in the hour of adversity and trial, manifest the same spirit of bitterness and hostility. This is one of the circumstances incident to the regenerate life. The natural man can go on acting daily from the same evil principle and gratifying the same evil concupiscence, with little difference but that of increased intensity. The Christian looks into his own heart; and, as he discovers the evils of his nature, he humbles himself on account of them, and looks for Divine aid to enable him to remove them. The manifestation of the evils of the heart leads, therefore, to two distinct states. It shows us what we are in and of ourselves. The curse, deep and bitter as it is, which brings evil to our view, produces a conviction in the mind that

it is deserved, and that the accusation is of Divine permission, to humble us under a sense of our corruption. We are prepared, therefore, to say with the humbled king, "Let him curse, because the Lord hath said unto him, Curse David." In this state of humility, in which the cursed nature of sin is seen, there is also a looking to the Lord that He may turn away the curse and give a blessing in its stead. The afflicted soul is ready to express the hope of David: "It may be that the Lord will look on mine affliction, and that the Lord will requite me good for His cursing this day." This patient submission to the worst that an accusing conscience or accusing spirits can do, lays in the mind the foundation of a better state; for every state of real upward progress is laid in the sincere acknowledgment that in ourselves we are nothing but evil, and that all good comes from God as its true and only possible source. In ourselves are only the evil and curse; in the Lord only have we goodness and the blessing.

When this foundation is once laid deep in the mind, the ultimate removal of the evil of the heart will be accomplished. But that removal can only be effected when its opposite good obtains such an ascendancy in the mind as to give us the necessary power to effect it. The beginning of Solomon's reign was the period when Shimei and the other eminent delinquents during David's reign were punished; for this represented a new state, and one in which that higher good—the good of love to the Lord—begins to obtain practical ascendancy in the regenerate mind.

But the question arises, Why did Solomon, instead of executing immediately the will of his father to put Shimei to death, lay upon him a personal restraint which there was a reasonable probability of his submitting to, and so defeating the object of David?

Jerusalem means the Church, and in a particular sense the doctrine of the Church. Shimei was required to build himself a house in Jerusalem, and not to go forth any whither, and was warned that on crossing the brook Kidron he should surely be put to death. Jerusalem represented the Church, and in particular the Church in regard to its doctrines. To build a house in Jerusalem is to build up the mind in conformity with the doctrines of the Church, and not to go out of Jerusalem is to live within the bounds or according to the teaching of the doctrines of truth and goodness. The lesson we are taught in the circumstance, that, so long as Shimei remained in Jerusalem, his life would be spared, is this, that so long as evil is restrained by the truths or doctrines of the Church, and a man lives in conformity with them, his spiritual life is preserved, but that whenever he throws off the restraints of doctrine and allows his evil to go forth into actual life, it brings certain death upon him. It is not by merely refraining from the act that spiritual life is preserved; for when there is the intention

to do evil, the act exists potentially in it, and, unless sincerely repented of, will come forth into actual existence also when occasion offers. So long as evil has not entered so deeply into the will and thence into act as to have become a fixed principle and a confirmed habit, the state is not a hopeless one. In a general way, too, so long as evil is confined to the mind, it does not bring its ultimate results upon the soul; since it is a law of Divine as it is of human justice that evil is never actually punished except when it comes into act. So that even in the future state men are not actually punished for the evils they have committed here, but for the evils they commit there. They carry with them the evil principles from which they have acted in this life; and as often as these bring them into states of actual opposition to goodness and truth, they fall under punishment as the means of correction and restraint.

But while the general condition was laid upon Shimei that he should not go beyond the city of Jerusalem, there was a particular line marked out as the boundary which he was not to pass. "For it shall be, that on the day thou goest out, and passest over the brook Kidron, thou shalt know for certain that thou shalt surely die."

Why should the command be given not to pass over the brook Kidron? That stream and the deep and dark ravine in which it flowed formed the boundary of hardly two sides of the high ground on which Jerusalem stood. It lay on the north and east of Jerusalem, and on the opposite side stood the mount of Olives, at the foot of which was the garden of Gethsemane. There was no doubt a reason for Solomon's specific limitation: and the Word itself will enable us to see what that reason was.

Kidron has been already mentioned in connection with the very events in David's history which brought Shimei's hostility into action. When David fled from Absalom, in leaving Jerusalem, it is recorded that, in the mournful procession, "all the country wept with a loud voice, and all the people passed over: the king also himself passed over the brook Kidron, and all the people passed over, toward the way of the wilderness." In the Gospel also this brook is mentioned in connection with an event in the Lord's life which still more strikingly marks the character of its signification. When the Divine Saviour had finished the Holy Supper, and had ended that prayer to the Father, in which He expresses the depth of His love for His people, and the ardency of His desire for union with the Father and conjunction with them, it is said in the 18th of John that "when Jesus had spoken these words, He went forth with His disciples over the brook Cedron, where was a garden, into the which He entered, and His disciples. And Judas also, which betrayed Him, knew the place."

Kidron, the dark and turbid, is thus, as it were, the boundary-line between the Church and the world, where peace and security end and tribulation and danger begin, with those, at least, who are passing through the trials of the spiritual life. Shimei had remained three years in Jerusalem, when two of his servants "ran away unto Achish, son of Maacah king of Gath. And they told Shimei, saying, Behold, thy servants be in Gath. And Shimei arose, and saddled his ass, and went to Gath to Achish to seek his servants: and Shimei went, and brought his servants from Gath." It is more than likely that in his eagerness to recover his runaway servants, Shimei had for the moment lost all recollection of the bond under which he held his life. In this Shimei was but the type of those who hold their spiritual life on the same conditions. When religion is to us a law but not a principle, and thus controls the outward actions but does not affect the inward life, the bond, though it has been solemnly consented to, is easily forgotten, and likely to be broken under any circumstances that strongly excite our self-interest or self-love. Time, also, which strengthens inward principles, tends to weaken the sense of outward obligations. The three years that Shimei remained in Jerusalem would have been to a spiritual man a full state of confirmation in the principles of religion, but proved in his case the complete forgetfulness or neglect of its duties. But Shimei, while he violated the law under which he himself lived, forgot the rights of his servants. The law of Moses says, "Thou shalt not deliver unto his master the servant which is escaped from his master unto thee" (Deut. xxiii. 15). This seems, indeed, to relate to the servants of foreign masters, but it is understood to have awarded to Israelitish servants the protection to which others were entitled. Shimei was like the servant in the parable whose lord forgave him a large debt only because he asked forgiveness, but who, when he went out from his master's presence, seized a fellow-servant by the throat who owed him a very small sum, and refused to listen to his entreaties for mercy. Servants are types of things that serve, as of truths that serve goodness. But truths may be made to serve evil, and then they become slaves, not by consent but by compulsion.

When they assert their freedom and are forced back into slavery, they are deprived of the rights which belong to them, and are doubly oppressed. Everything connected with religion partakes of the freedom which religion confers, and which it breathes. Even the laws of Moses were founded on this principle, provision being made for the emancipation of those who, from any cause, had been reduced to servitude, and no one could be retained beyond the time of his release but by his own consent. Shimei, although he consented to the restriction laid upon his own movements, no doubt felt uneasy under the restraint, and asserted his freedom to bring his servants into bonds.

But his unlawful freedom cost him his life. So with those who deeply sin against the truth. If they continue within the limits which it assigns to them, they will save themselves alive, but if they transgress, the sword of truth will cut them in sunder, and appoint them their portion with the hypocrites.

Shimei was the last who fell under the sword of Benaiah of those who had transgressed in the time of David. And it is added, as the result of the removal of these discordant elements, that the kingdom was established in the hand of Solomon. In delivering the parable of the wheat and the tares, which relates to the time and the process of judgment, the Lord says of the angels, "They shall gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father" (Matt. xiii. 41, 43). Divine judgment is designed to remove all things that offend against the laws of truth, and that sin against the laws of goodness, that righteousness may shine forth as the sun of love and truth in the kingdom of the Father, which is the kingdom of love that rules by wisdom. This is the kingdom represented by that of Solomon.

CHAPTER III.

SOLOMON'S CHOICE.

1 *Kings* iii. 1-14.

THE reign of Solomon is one of the most splendid in the annals of the world. Still more celebrated for his wisdom than for his magnificence, he raised the fame of the kingdom of which he was the temporal head to a degree so eminent as to make his reign the admiration, not only of his own but of every succeeding age. The foundation of his outward grandeur and prosperity had indeed been laid by the power and energy of his father David, who had subdued his enemies on every side, and done much to prepare the way for the pursuit of national wealth in the path of peaceful industry. But, like similar advantages, these would have availed but little had not the son of David followed up the work that had been so energetically begun. Hereditary advantages, unless wisely seized upon and employed, may prove a curse instead of a blessing ; but cannot be greatly improved without the virtues necessary to advancement.

The reign of Solomon is not, however, to be regarded by us simply as a temporal sovereignty of great wisdom and grandeur. Solomon was an eminent type of Him who said of Himself, "Behold a greater

than Solomon is here." The history of Solomon is therefore one in which we have not merely an historical, but a spiritual and personal interest. It leads us to look through Solomon to that King who not only is wise, but in whom all wisdom dwells—who is wisdom itself, infinite and eternal; who by His wisdom stretched out the heavens and laid the foundations of the earth; who sitteth upon the flood and reigneth a King for ever. The kingdom over which this King reigneth consists not only of the material but of the spiritual universe. Wide and magnificent is this kingdom. The whole starry heaven with its countless myriads of planetary worlds is the material seat of His empire. These vast and glorious dominions He rules with such wisdom that all is preserved in perfect order, so as to result in one grand harmony, ever showing forth the praises of the Lord. "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth His handywork."

If this part of His dominions is vast and glorious, what must be the extent and glory of that where angels and spirits dwell! There are congregated the spirits of those who have peopled the planets of the starry heaven for thousands of ages; and who inhabit a universe spiritual but substantial, one as far exceeding in magnificence the material universe as mind exceeds matter, and the glories of which "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive."

But He whose dominion extends over the wide universe has His kingdom no less truly in every sincere lowly mind and humble heart. For the High and Lofty One that inhabiteth eternity itself dwells also with him that is of a contrite and humble spirit. Here is that kingdom in which our immediate interest centres. The kingdom of God within us is that in which we are most immediately and deeply interested, since it is this which gives us admission to the general kingdom of the Lord, as it exists in the Church on earth and in heaven. To the kingdom of God as it is in the human mind we are individually directed, when contemplating under a spiritual view the representative kingdom of Israel; and that kingdom in its highest state is presented before us when the kingdom under Solomon is the subject of our reflections.

The reign of Solomon, as distinguished from the reigns of Saul and David, is descriptive of the reign of truth in its highest condition, or in the highest region of the mind. Divine truth is first received in the memory, next in the understanding, and lastly in the will. It is first known, then understood, then loved. In the memory it is knowledge, in the understanding it is intelligence, in the will it is wisdom. These are the three degrees of the reception of truth, and the quality of the truth is determined by reception. And these degrees, and the different

kinds of government which exist under them, are described representatively by the successive reigns of these three kings of Israel.

In our reflections on the history of the kingdom of Israel, we have passed through the troubled reigns of Saul and of David, which place in a striking manner before us the tribulations and conflicts incident to the Christian, while wielding the truth as a sword against the corruptions of his own heart. We now come to the contemplation of a state in which these corruptions are so far removed as to admit of a more peaceful condition of mind, one in which the good rather than the truth, the love rather than the light of religion rules in the heart and understanding. It is under the rule of love that peace prevails, that justice triumphs, that prosperity advances, and that the temple of the Lord is erected in the human mind.

When the history is applied in this particular way to the mind of the regenerating Christian, Solomon is to be understood as representing the Lord, not only as He is in Himself, but as He is in man—in those who are of a contrite and humble spirit. It is the Lord in us that inspires us with every good desire, as well as with every true thought, and that leads us to every wise choice. The choice of Solomon is the choice to which the Lord guides every one who sincerely desires to be led of Him, as the only wise God our Saviour. This subject we now come to consider; and we trust it may be the means of both inclining and leading us to the attainment of the best gift of heaven—the wisdom of being led by the Lord and not by self.

The series of the history leads us first to consider that state of mind which disposes us to ask and prepares us to receive the wisdom that cometh from above. When God appeared to Solomon in a dream, and desired him to ask what He should give him, the first feeling that was excited in the mind of the young king was a sense of his deficiencies. "Thou hast made Thy servant king instead of David my father: and I am but a little child: I know not how to go out or come in." The first step to true wisdom is a sense of our own ignorance. This sense does not imply a state of ignorance. Ignorance does not see itself. Knowledge reveals it; and some advancement in knowledge is necessary before ignorance can be truly discovered. A sense of our own ignorance can only exist when we have made such an advancement in knowledge as to see that what we know is as nothing in comparison with what we do not know. That which Solomon confessed was not absolute but relative ignorance. He saw himself at the head of a great people that could not be numbered nor counted for multitude; and he was oppressed with a consciousness of his inability adequately to perform the duties of a judge and ruler amongst them. He was better able to discharge the duties of his high office than if, with the same amount of knowledge and discernment,

he had been entirely satisfied with himself. But he never would have reached the excellence to which he attained had he not been wise enough to see how much there was to acquire that he did not possess, and had he not been humble enough to acknowledge his deficiencies, as compared with the demands that would be made upon him. These are the conditions of the understanding and the heart that give the promise of true wisdom. But to be wise in our own eyes, and to be puffed up with notions of our own superior wisdom, closes the mind against the admission of that high gift, and leaves us only full of ourselves.

Each of us, like Solomon, has a kingdom, to govern which judgment and discernment are necessary. We are required to govern in our own minds and in our own affairs. In the mind are innumerable affections and thoughts; and an understanding heart is required, more than in anything else, to enable us to discern between the good and the bad, the true and the false. The affections are good or bad, as they grow out of the love of God or the love of self; and the thoughts are true or false as they favour those affections, by reasons grounded in the truth of God or by reasonings drawn from our own carnal wisdom. We cannot discern between these, so as to judge of their real character, from any light of our own. Evil does not feel itself to be evil, falsity does not see itself to be false. So far as we judge of ourselves from our own will and wisdom, we judge unrighteous judgment; and rather reverse than confirm the judgment of heaven. For we are all alike naturally disposed to call good evil and evil good, and to put darkness for light and light for darkness. No one in an earthly court and in worldly affairs is qualified to be the judge of his own cause. How much less in matters of eternity; in the court of our own mind, if we are our own witness, and our own judge to acquit or condemn. Every spiritual and eternal matter must be brought to God, by being submitted to the law and to the testimony, which He has given for deciding every controversy, not only between man and man, but between man and God—between the cause of God and that of self in the court of the human conscience. There it is that judgment is to be pronounced by every one of us. And if we would have a conscience void of offence towards God and man we must be conscious of our own inability to pronounce from day to day a judgment that is just in the sight of heaven, and must desire above all things to receive the necessary wisdom from the Lord. To receive this wisdom we must become little children, not only in intellect but in heart—conscious not only of how little we know, but how little we are, so little that we know not how to go out or to come in. These words are peculiarly appropriate from the lips of Solomon; for they have relation, not to the leading of the people out to war and into peace after victory, but

are expressive of the guiding of a flock by their shepherd. In this way it is applied by Moses to the leader of the congregation who should be appointed after his death, and is afterwards used in the New Testament in reference to the people of whom the Lord is the shepherd. Moses says, "Let the Lord, the God of the spirits of all flesh, set a man over the congregation, which may go out before them, and which may lead them out, and which may bring them in; that the congregation of the Lord be not as sheep which have no shepherd" (Num. xxvii. 16, 17). The Lord says, "I am the door: by Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture. I am the good shepherd" (John x. 9, 11). These alternate acts of going out and coming in are those by which the mind is continually perfected, and by which the Christian is enabled to follow the Lord in doing His will. We go out when we engage in the affairs of the world and in the business of life, and we go in when we turn our attention inwards or retire within ourselves. We retire within ourselves for self-examination and for the cultivation of those graces that should enrich the mind, and we go out into the world in the performance of our duties, in which we practise the virtues that should adorn the life.

If we have now been enabled more clearly to see and more powerfully to feel the necessity for and the value of that gift for which Solomon prayed, we may turn our attention to the gift itself which he desired. "Give Thy servant an understanding heart to judge Thy people, that I may discern between good and bad. And God said, Behold, I have given thee a wise and an understanding heart."

An understanding, a hearing, a discerning heart was the gift, of all others, that Solomon desired; and the Lord gave him a heart both to be wise and to understand. This double portion of the Divine Spirit gives the power of discerning between good and evil, and between the true and the false. The higher gift, which always implies, when it does not express, the presence of the other, is that to which we shall advert; by pointing out the origin and distinctive character of true wisdom.

Wisdom has its origin in God, as has everything good and true. But every gift of God is to be obtained by something else than simply asking for it. There must be a preparation to receive it. And that preparation is made by a constant view to the end or use which it is designed to serve, and by the employment of the means for securing it. Wisdom is not knowledge, nor is it even intelligence, although it cannot exist without them. The greatest amount of knowledge, the highest degree of intelligence, cannot constitute wisdom. They differ, not in extent only, but in kind. Intelligence is more of the head, wisdom is more of the heart. The distinguishing characteristic of wisdom is, that it is not of the understanding chiefly, but of the will;

that it is not truth only, but truth united to goodness ; that it is not faith only, but faith united to love ; that it is not speculative but practical. Wisdom is knowledge and intelligence applied to life. It does not consist in knowing many things, but in using those which are known, whether they be few or many; to the glory of God, the welfare of the neighbour, and the good of our own souls, which make up the perfection of human life.

When Solomon had set his heart upon wisdom, as that which was above all other things calculated to adorn his kingly office and exalt and bless the kingdom to which Providence had called him, he not only received that largeness of heart which he desired, but he obtained along with it the things which he thought undeserving of so solemn a prayer, but which so many in all situations of life, and especially in his, are disposed to regard as the chief good. The choice was given him by One who was able to give him what he thought good to ask : " Ask what I shall give thee," said the Disposer of all things. Is not this choice still offered to the children of men ? And if men were unselfish enough to covet the best gifts, the less precious would be given, at least in such measure as would be consistent with the preservation and ascendancy of the first. " Because," said the Lord, " thou hast asked this thing, and hast not asked for thyself long life ; neither hast thou asked riches for thyself, nor hast asked the life of thine enemies ; I have done according to thy words : and I have also given thee that which thou hast not asked, both riches, and honour : and if thou wilt walk in My ways, and keep My statutes and My commandments, then I will lengthen thy days." Riches and honour, in the spiritual sense, are the riches of knowledge and the exaltation connected with it, and long life, or many days, are the states of the spiritual life, both in time and eternity, that result from obedience to the will of God. But even these lesser gifts, when given to those who desire and receive wisdom, assume a different character, because they occupy a different place in the affections of the heart. Being regarded not as ends but as means, they are subservient to the aims and efforts of wisdom, and are the ministers in its works of judgment and justice. The knowledge which leads to wisdom, or the truth which leads to goodness, is different from that which follows wisdom. The knowledge which precedes wisdom is more of our own acquisition, that which follows wisdom is more the gift of God, and has more of God in it and less of self : it is bestowed of the Divine bounty upon those who have the greater possession.

In the New Testament this result of the better choice is declared plainly and emphatically : " Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness ; and all these things shall be added unto you." Wisdom is the principal thing. It is the one thing needful ; and he who

chooses that good part will not only secure it, but will obtain with it, and indged in it, all things necessary for life eternal.

As true wisdom comes from heaven, it is known by its heavenly character, as distinguished from that which is earth-born. Wisdom is justified of all her children, whether they be children of light or children of darkness. "Who is a wise man," says James, "and endued with knowledge among you? let him show out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom. But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy" (iii. 13-17). Be this wisdom the object of our choice; let its fruits be manifested in our lives; and then indeed will its benign influences diffuse around us, as it will establish within us, the spirit of all that is lovely and blessed.

CHAPTER IV.

SOLOMON'S FIRST AND WISE JUDGMENT.

1. Kings iii. 27.

THE first judgment of Solomon is the finest instance of extemporaneous judicature that is to be found in the records of any age or country. The wisdom of that judgment has been so highly and widely appreciated, that with a difference of personal attribution, it has found a place in the traditions or the literature of several other nations.

When we take into view all the circumstances of the case, we must be convinced that the judgment of Solomon is altogether worthy of the high fame which has attended it.

In Oriental nations, legal machinery was much more simple, and legal proceedings much more summary, than in the nations of the West, and particularly than in those of modern Europe. But this simplicity often rendered judicial cases much more difficult and onerous for the judge. The sovereign, who was the supreme judge, when he exercised the judicial part of his office, generally united in himself the various functions which, with us, are divided between the counsel, the jury, and the chief justice. There was no long array of witnesses to accuse and to exculpate: no professional counsel using their utmost efforts, on the one hand to criminate, and on the other to exonerate; to examine and cross-examine witnesses, to analyze and sift the evidence, and to employ all their legal knowledge and rhetorical powers

to place the case in its best or in its worst light, according to their opposite aims. There was no jury to deliberate and decide upon the guilt or innocence of the accused party ; leaving the judge to preside over the whole proceedings, and pronounce sentence according to the law. All this, to whatever extent it was done, was done by the judge himself, and by the sovereign when he acted in that capacity. Besides this difference in the forms of procedure, the trial often followed immediately upon the commission or discovery of the crime, without any previous knowledge of the case on the part of the judge. This comparatively simple mode of judicial proceeding, in which so much depended on the talents or even the temper of the judge, frequently made it necessary for him to have recourse to ingenious expedients with a view to discover the truth and enable him to pronounce a just decision. And it appears to be the genius of the Oriental mind to be more ingenious than profound, more quick to penetrate than patient to investigate.

The case in which Solomon, then only about twenty years of age, was first called upon to adjudicate, might well have put to a severe test the wisdom of an older man and a more experienced judge. Two women appeared before the king. "The one woman said, O my lord, I and this woman dwell in one house ; and I was delivered of a child with her in the house. And it came to pass the third day after that I was delivered, that this woman was delivered also : and we were together ; there was no stranger with us in the house, save we two in the house. And this woman's child died in the night ; because she overlaid it. And she arose at midnight, and took my son from beside me, while thine handmaid slept, and laid it in her bosom, and laid her dead child in my bosom."

The difficulty of this case is well stated by the king himself. "The one saith, This is my son that liveth, and thy son is the dead : and the other saith, Nay ; but thy son is the dead, and my son is the living." How was such a case to be decided ? The women themselves are the only witnesses, and one seems to be as much entitled to credit as the other. Their testimony is opposed ; there seems no way to discover the truth. The spectators no doubt felt the difficulty which the king expressed. Some may have believed that the youthful judge was as much perplexed as they themselves were ; and they may be supposed to have been keenly anxious to see how he would extricate himself from so difficult a position. Others perhaps remembered that God had appeared to him in a dream, and promised him the precious gift which he had asked, the gift of wisdom ; and they expected to see his wisdom exemplified in the judgment he was about to pronounce. What then must have been their disappointment and even their horror when, after commanding a sword to be brought, they

heard the king utter the sentence, "Divide the living child in two, and give half to the one, and half to the other." In this feigned judgment, which those who heard it must have regarded as the result of weakness or of cruelty, lay the secret of the judge's power. Besides the varied knowledge of the king, who "spake of trees, from the cedar-tree that is in Lebanon, even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall; who spake also of beasts, and of fowls, and of creeping things and of fishes," he possessed that higher knowledge which is more entitled to the name of wisdom, the knowledge of the human heart. Unable to discover the truth from the statements of the women themselves, though he no doubt suspected it, he had resolved to make an appeal to their maternal instincts, their motherly nature. He judged that the impending fate of the child would bring out the feelings of the mother's heart, and enable him to distinguish, by an infallible sign, between the real and the pretended parent. In this he was not mistaken. Solomon's expectation was fully realized. When the infant's life was in danger, "then spake the woman whose the living child was unto the king, for her bowels yearned upon her son, and she said, O my lord, give her the living child, and in no wise slay it. But the other said, Let it be neither mine nor thine, but divide it." How must the horror of the spectators have been turned into admiration, if not melted into tenderness, when the king pronounced his real and final judgment: "Give *HER* the living child, and in no wise slay it: *SHE* is the mother thereof."

Admiration of this decision was not confined to the king's court. His fame extended far beyond it. "All Israel heard of the judgment which the king had judged; and they feared the king: for they saw that the wisdom of God was in him, to do judgment."

In the record of this judgment every one will acknowledge, not only the wisdom of Solomon, but the faithfulness of the description, as true to nature, of the exhibition of feeling by the mother of the living child. She loved the child as her son, and ardently desired that it might be restored to her. But much as she loved it as her offspring, she loved it still more for its own sake; and she was willing to resign it into the hands of her adversary to save it from destruction. Not so the mother of the dead child, she was willing not only to lose it but to see it die. There may seem indeed something of inconsistency in the represented conduct of this woman. Why should she, who had stolen the child of another, and had borne false witness to prove it her own, yet prefer to see it slain rather than it should be restored to its real mother?

With Hebrew women the desire for children was a passion. But this passion sprang not always from the love of the innocents themselves, but from the love of that honour which the possession of chil-

dren conferred. The love of their children might therefore be nothing but the love of themselves. And indeed all really evil parents do not love their children for their children's sake, but for their own: they love themselves in their children. The consequence is, that they do not love, but inwardly hate, all other children but their own: and so intense is this hatred, that, according to the testimony of Swedenborg, in the other life, where the inward disposition comes into full and undisguised manifestation, wicked mothers desire to tear in pieces all other children than those whom they believe to be their own. If this testimony is true, the conduct of this woman is a correct representation of the character of such a one as she may reasonably be supposed to have been.

But the judgment of Solomon, interesting and instructive as it is as a subject of sacred history, viewed only in its literal sense, is still more interesting and instructive when regarded as representative of a subject intimately connected with the spiritual interests of mankind, and significative of spiritual states and circumstances in the regenerating process, by which we are born anew.

Solomon was one of the most distinguished representatives of the Lord Jesus Christ, as the Ruler of the kingdom established in righteousness and peace.

In Scripture, women, in their general typical character, represent the Church. And the first judgment of Solomon has reference to the state of the Church. The careless and unnatural woman who overlay her child, laying her dead infant in her neighbour's bosom, and taking and claiming the living child of her companion as her own, yet willing to see that innocent destroyed, represented the Jewish Church; while the woman whose the living child was, and who was willing to relinquish it living rather than see it put to death, represented the Gentile Church.

These women, it is true, are called harlots. But this does not render the representation the less but the more true and striking. For both the Jews and the Gentiles are described as having turned away from God, and become worshippers of idols; and as the Lord is the Husband of His Church, as well as the Father of His people, all idolatry is described in the Old Testament as spiritual fornication and adultery. In Hosea the Lord, addressing the children of His people, says, "Plead with your mother, plead: for she is not my wife, neither am I her husband; for their mother hath played the harlot: she that conceived them hath done shamefully" (ii. 2, 5). The Jewish Church is not only accused of having departed from the Lord as her true Husband, but as having in her skirts the blood of the souls of poor innocents (Jer. ii. 34), by which the Jewish people are accused of having done violence to innocence itself. For innocence is the inmost

life of true religion, of love to God and love to man ; and where there is no innocence there is no spiritual life in the Church.

The Jewish Church, represented by the woman with the dead child, had destroyed in herself every principle of spiritual innocence ; a destruction which was represented also by the massacre, by Herod, of the infants in Bethlehem, with the view of destroying the Infant Jesus, who was innocence itself ; and by whose preservation that of the human race was effected through redemption.

The Gentiles, represented by the woman whose the living child was, though addicted to the sin of idolatry, were yet in a much less corrupt state and less debased condition than the Jews who despised them, and who regarded them as sinners, while they considered themselves as alone righteous. Not only had the Jews destroyed all innocence and all truth in themselves, but they had taken from the heathen, with whom they had been mingled, many of the principles which formed their religion, and appropriated them as their own ; till the Lord came into the world, when the judgment which He performed disclosed their true nature, and deprived them of their assumed character and possessions.

But there was another and a still higher antitype to this circumstance in the spiritual world, where judgment has its cause and its beginning, and which is the scene of every general judgment.

It is there more especially that the tares and the wheat grow up together until the harvest. And these tares, we may observe, were sown while men slept, as the woman laid her dead child in her neighbour's bosom while she was asleep, in the silence and darkness of the night. It is also in that world more especially that the tares and the wheat, the good and the evil, the true and the false, are finally separated from each other ; that from him that hath not is taken away that which he seemeth to have—that the good and truth which he has assumed, but which is not his own, is taken from him and given to him that hath, that he may have abundance. It is there, indeed, that a just and final judgment assigns to each that which is his own.

Even in this world something of this takes place, as its correlative. In every case of human degeneracy, the line which marks the separation between good and evil, between the true and the false, becomes less and less distinct, until, in some things at least, the boundary-line is obliterated, and the perception of the real difference between them is lost. And every act of Divine judgment is for this, among other purposes, to restore the knowledge, which had been taken away, of the difference between the clean and the unclean, that a separation may be effected between them. This effect of human degeneracy has been too fully realized in the past history of the Christian Church itself. But we cannot look around us without being convinced that the line of distinction which

men had obliterated is again appearing—that the distinction between the true and the false, the good and the evil, is again beginning to be seen more clearly ; that the dead and the living child are being assigned to their rightful owners ; that truth and innocence are being more appropriated to the good, and the evil are being left more fully to their own natural destitution. And indeed it is one of the effects of such judgments that the yearning heart shall find the object of its desires and affections—that a good head and heart shall understand truth, and feel the satisfaction of goodness. For the days are come in which the kingdom of righteousness is restored, and justice and judgment reign.

There is a still more particular sense and a more pointed application of this interesting relation to be noticed.

In the woman who was the mother of the dead child, we may see the character of those who, by a careless or abandoned life, entirely destroy innocence in themselves ; who make no scruple to rob others of their innocence ; and who would, without compunction, destroy the innocence and peace of their neighbour, even when they themselves can reap no advantage from their neighbour's loss. It is the very nature and constant effort of the wicked to lay their own dead principles in the bosoms of others, and to assume a life which is not their own. Such persons desire happiness as ardently as others, and wish to be admitted into heaven, if they have any belief in heaven, because they believe that happiness is there to be found. They can appear at the marriage without the wedding garment ; or can ask from others, their companions, the oil of goodness, which they have neglected to procure for themselves, or having procured have lost, that they may revive their dying lamps, to light them on their way to an abode for which they are not prepared. But the door is shut against them.

In the woman who was the mother of the living child we see the character of those who, though erring, are yet in the love of innocence and truth for their own sake ; and who, though subject to trials from the machinations of the selfish and impure, will be delivered by the final interposition of a protective and overruling Providence.

We may briefly trace the analogy of this subject still further, and point out its application to the individual mind. The two women in one house are emblems of two affections in one mind—one genuine and the other spurious, one true and the other false. And in Solomon's judgment we have a type of the highest and best means of discerning between the genuine and the spurious, the true and the false, in regard to the principle of goodness in ourselves. In judging, we form our decisions either from outward evidence or from inward discernment, or from both together. Our judgments for the most part rest on their united testimony. But there are cases in which outward evidence

may be insufficient, or in which there may be a seeming balance of testimony that leaves the mind in suspense. The genuineness or the Divinity of the Scriptures, for instance, is with some a subject of doubt, and is both affirmed and denied by those who judge of them by external evidence alone. We do not say that external testimony in this case is of no force, but it is obvious that it is of itself insufficient. Is there no means by which men disposed to judge justly are able to arrive at a certain and right conclusion? Solomon's judgment enables us to see that there is. Affection will sometimes enable us to untie a knot which thought makes but the faster. When the understanding is unable to determine, the heart will often give the true decision. The conscience will often enable us to see at once what a long process of reasoning cannot enable us to discover. We are sometimes at a loss how to judge and act, when a balance of reasons are present to the mind. Two different affections may each claim to be the mother of the living child—to be the parent of vital innocence. Do not natural and spiritual affection sometimes display this character? Does not natural affection at times maintain that natural delights are living, and that spiritual delights are dead? and yet natural delights, so far as they have any vitality in them, derive their life from spiritual affection; and if the delights are merely natural, they are stolen from the spiritual, and claimed by the natural as its own. There is nothing of vitality and innocence in natural delight but what it draws from spiritual affection. How is this to be discovered? Spiritual affection has a heart of goodness in it that can be appealed to; natural affection is heartless, or it is a heart of stone, that is susceptible of no tender emotions or disinterested affections. It is by appealing to this inner nature of affection that we can, in any doubtful case, discern between the genuine and the spurious; and that will enable us, without the shadow of a doubt, to say which is the spiritual affection and which is the natural, and to restore to the arms of the true mother the innocence which the false would willingly have seen divided, and thus dissipated and destroyed.

Let us remember that, in the language of the apostle, we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, to receive according to the deeds done in the body, whether they be good or evil. We shall not, as is too often the case among men, be judged by what we say, but by what we are. The Lord looketh upon the heart; and through the heart we shall be judged, according to our works, our works being such as our hearts are. In that day the secrets of all hearts shall be revealed, and every one will be rewarded according to his work. Happy will it be for those who have cherished innocence. Whatsoever may have been their trials, the innocence which they have borne and nourished will be restored to their own bosom.

CHAPTER V.

THE POWERFUL SECURITY ENJOYED UNDER SOLOMON'S REIGN.

2 Kings iv. 21.

THAT earthly government is the best which secures to those who live under it, not only general protection from enemies without, but particular protection from enemies within; which removes all fear that the rights of private property and the sanctities of private life will be invaded, and which leaves the people in the undisturbed possession of liberty to cultivate the virtues, and enjoy the pleasures, of domestic life. That is the highest condition of national security when the inhabitants, like the subjects of Solomon, "dwell safely, every man under his vine and under his fig-tree." In the spiritual kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ these two kinds of security are preserved inviolate. The external enemies to the stability and peace of the Lord's kingdom are the powers of darkness. The enemies who consist of the wicked in the world are the instruments by whom these act in the outer circles of the spiritual life. Of these there is no reason to fear, if the inner life can be preserved in connection with Him who is its author and preserver, and if the inward enemies of the heart itself do not obtain power over us. These enemies are our own evil ends, tempers, and lusts. The Lord by His works of redemption and salvation has provided for the security of every one against *all* the power of the enemy, both from within and from without, and for the enjoyment, by every loyal and virtuous subject of His kingdom, of the blessings of safety and prosperity. In His kingdom "Judah and Israel dwell safely, every man under his vine and under his fig-tree."

The particular and general, or the internal and external government of the Lord's kingdom are described representatively by those of Solomon in this chapter. Besides princes, priests, and other high officers, there were twelve officers over all Israel, who provided victuals for the king and his household: each man his month in a year. This distinction and subordination among the rulers in the kingdom represent such as exist in the Lord's kingdom, in heaven, in the Church, and in the human mind. In the Lord's kingdom, the principles of charity hold the highest place, and second and subordinate to these are the principles of faith. Among the highest officers of Solomon were the two high priests whose function corresponded to the ministry of love. The twelve lower officers with their monthly service points out their function as analogous to the ministry of faith. In the spirit-

ual sense periods of time signify states of life. A month, originally derived from the duration of the moon, and here expressed by it, is emblematical of a state of faith—the grace of faith being the “lesser light” which God places in the firmament of the inner man; and dependent upon and subordinate to the “greater light” of love and charity.

In accordance with this analogy, the tree of life in the Christian paradise bears twelve manner of fruits, and yields her fruits every month. For the vital principle of religion, which is love or charity, produces fruits according to the states of faith which exist in connection with it. Love is life in its essence and origin, but love has its development through faith, and has a quality according to it. Love in the soul is like heat in nature. Love is the proximate cause of spiritual, as heat is of animal and vegetable, life. Faith in the soul is like light in nature. Faith is the instrumental cause of the manifestation of spiritual life, as light is of natural life, in forms of beauty and fruitfulness.

The daily provision which we are enabled to make by faith working from love is the supply of the spiritual means of supporting the life of the soul. For the soul, not less than the body, requires to be sustained and fed, and to receive a daily supply—more especially in every recurring state of the spiritual life. The life of love in the soul is like the fire that burned upon the altar, which, to prevent its going out, was supplied with wood every morning. So has the love of God in the soul to be fed continually with instruction and practice in righteousness, to prevent its extinction, and to renew its power.

The provision of Solomon for one, or for each day, consisted of thirty measures of fine flour and threescore measures of meal, ten fat oxen, twenty oxen out of the pastures, and a hundred sheep, besides harts, and roebucks, and fallow deer, and fatted fowl. So does the provision for the spiritual life, comprehended here under the general name of bread, and all which is expressed by the “daily bread” of the Lord’s Prayer, include all the principles of goodness and truth, celestial, spiritual, and natural. The fine and common flour denote celestial truth, derived from good, as flour is from wheat, and from which the good that supports celestial life in the soul is formed, and which good is specifically meant by bread. The animals of the flock and herd are the internal and external goods of the spiritual class, sheep especially denoting principles of charity. The untamed denizens of the field are the various principles of good and truth in the natural mind, or those of the most external character. The numbers, of which three predominates in the first class and ten in the second, are expressive of their quality, as being, like the trine in all things and the decade in many things, perfect in itself, and complete in its development.

While Solomon had his kingdom organized so wisely by these internal arrangements, that everything was preserved in order, his dominion extended over other kingdoms which served him and were tributary to him. "Solomon reigned over all kingdoms from the river unto the land of the Philistines, and unto the border of Egypt: they brought presents, and served Solomon all the days of his life. For he had dominion over all the region on this side the river, from Tiphshah even to Azzah, over all the kings on this side the river: and he had peace on all sides round about him." This extensive dominion of Solomon was intended to represent the spiritual dominion of the Lord in His glory, which is indeed described prophetically in almost the same words. In the 72nd Psalm, which literally relates to Solomon, but prophetically, as is evident, to the Saviour God and King, the extent of His kingdom is thus described, at the 8th verse: "He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth. . . . All kings shall fall down before Him: all nations shall serve Him." These same words occur in the prophecy of Zechariah, in connection with those applied in the Gospel to our Lord: "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: He is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass. His dominion shall be from sea even to sea, and from the river even to the ends of the earth" (ix. 9, 10). The extent of Solomon's dominion represented therefore the extent of the dominion of our Lord, specifically under the last best dispensation of His Church on earth, in which His love and wisdom shall be, more perfectly than before, the ruling principles in the minds and lives of men. The dominion of the Lord, as described by that of Solomon, is 'over the whole land, from east to west, from north to south. From east to west, which was from sea to sea, is the extension of the Lord's dominion over the mind in regard to states of goodness, and from north to south, which was from the river to the ends of the earth, is the extension of dominion over the mind in regard to all states of truth. The particular description of Solomon's dominion extending over all kingdoms, from the river Euphrates, that is, from Assyria, to the land of the Philistines, and to the river of Egypt, is descriptive of the Lord's dominion over the whole mind, from the rational to the scientific, or, from the highest perceptions of reason to the lowest acquisitions of sense. In the human mind there are three things that succeed in order, the rational, the natural, and the corporeal. These three parts of man wonderfully communicate, the corporeal with the natural, the natural with the rational. At birth man is merely corporeal, afterwards he becomes natural, and at length rational. These three constitute man; for humanity begins in the inmost of the rational

and terminates in the ultimate of the sensual. These, in their regenerate state, are the Assyria, Philistia, and Egypt to which the dominion of Solomon extends. But he is said to have reigned over all kingdoms between the Euphrates and the Nile, meaning that, besides being the ruler of his own kingdom, all other kingdoms were subject and tributary to him. We have seen that David subdued the nations bordering on Canaan; and that these represented such hereditary qualities as can be brought under subjection to spiritual principles, and can be made to contribute to the uses of the spiritual life. All these are now said to be in a state of entire submission to Solomon, who reigns over them; and they bring presents, and serve him; and this shall continue all the days of his life.

While all is submission and service without, all is peace, security, and enjoyment within. Judah and Israel are many, as the sand which is by the sea in multitude, eating and drinking, and making merry. And Judah and Israel dwell safely, every man under his vine and under his fig-tree, from Dan even to Beersheba, all the days of Solomon.

This is the state of the regenerate mind, when the affections of goodness and truth are multiplied indefinitely, and when they appropriate with delight the goods and truths of the Word as the meat and drink of the soul. This too is the state of peace, when "they dwell safely, every man under his vine and under his fig-tree, from Dan even to Beersheba;" when they live under the influence of spiritual and natural goodness, from the inmost even to the outermost of their life.

The beautiful imagery here employed to describe the peaceful and happy state of the Lord's spiritual Judah and Israel, is used in the prophets to describe the then future state of the Church, after and consequent on the coming of the Lord. Thus in the prophecy of Micah: "They shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks: nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig-tree; and none shall make them afraid: for the mouth of the Lord of Hosts hath spoken it" (iv. 3, 4). The end of war is the conclusion of the conflict, in the mind and life of the Christian, which consists in the flesh warring against the spirit and the spirit against the flesh. This spiritual warfare does come to an end in those who suffer themselves to be regenerated; and peace, true spiritual and enduring peace, follows the conquest of the evils of the heart and life. Then it is that the swords are actually beat into ploughshares and the spears into pruning-hooks; for the Divine truths of the Word that had served to defend him against and to destroy the evil and false principles of his corrupt nature are capable of being applied, and are applied, to the cultivation of the mind, and its advancement in the life that produces the peaceable fruits of righteousness. The vine and the fig,

under the shadow of which the mind reposes, are the productions of the mind itself. Nothing that is without us, or separate from ourselves, can be either a shadow from the heat or a covert from the storm. True it is, the Lord is the vine ; we are but the branches ; and so far from our having any vitality in ourselves, except we abide in the vine we are cut off as withered branches, fit only to be cast into the fire and burned. But while it is true that we live and grow and bear fruit only while we abide in the vine, it is no less true that the life of the vine is communicated to us, and circulates through us, and produces in us the similitude of itself. The Lord compares His kingdom to a man who planted a vineyard and let it out to husbandmen. But where does He plant His vineyard but in the minds and hearts of His people ? And the vine can be planted, as the seed of the kingdom can be sown, only in the good ground of an honest heart. The vine and fig-tree under which the regenerate dwell safely are first implanted by the Lord, and grow up under His care during their progressive advancement in a life of intelligence and virtue. His is the life which enters into and perfects them ; but ours is the power to determine whether or not the Divine life shall be received and manifested in the growth of the mind in truth and love, and of the life in holiness.

If we would enjoy that state of security and peace which this imagery so expressively depicts, we must, like the husbandmen in the parable of the Lord, use the means. We must work in the vineyard and dig about the fig-tree and dung it. We must also use the ploughshare and the pruning-hook, as we have previously used the sword and the spear. We must have broken up the fallow ground, and we must keep the ground in cultivation : we must also, like the Divine Husbandman Himself, prune the tree of withered or exuberant branches, that the fruit-producing power may be preserved and improved. When the labour of combat has ceased, this work of love must continue ; and its reward is security and delight.

CHAPTER VI.

PREPARATIONS FOR BUILDING THE TEMPLE.

1 *Kings* v.

THE building of the temple of Jerusalem was the great achievement, as it was the great glory, of Solomon's reign. Viewed in any other light than as a typical work it might be unwise to regard as the greatest glory of a monarch's reign the erection of an edifice, even for the worship of God, at so great an expenditure of a nation's wealth.

There are many other ways in which a sovereign and people can manifest their piety besides the rearing of magnificent temples. The greatest triumphs of architectural skill, encouraged by the greatest expenditure of wealth, are not always identified with the purest worship. Yet the temple of Solomon, when the case is fully considered, did not involve so vast an expenditure of the national wealth as may at first sight appear. The temple at Jerusalem was the one only place in the whole of Palestine where the worship of Jehovah was celebrated. The expense, therefore, might not be so great, when compared with that of the numerous churches which Christian nations provide for the performance of public worship. But uniqueness as well as magnificence was no doubt required to render the Jewish temple an adequate representative of its great Antitype. As Solomon himself was the highest regal representative of the Lord, who was to be born into the world as the King of the Jews, the temple which he reared was the highest representative of the bodily temple, in which the Sovereign of the universe was pleased to manifest Himself to men on earth. That Body—that Humanity—in which the Divine Majesty clothed Himself, and came down with shaded glory to the abodes of men, was ONE. The human nature which our Lord assumed was akin to universal humanity; but from the first, and still more at the last, the Lord's humanity, in relation to our common humanity, stood alone. The community and yet separateness of the Lord's humanity, both by nativity and resurrection—by its first and second birth—is variously expressed in the language of inspiration, both verbally and representatively. "Thou spakest in vision to Thy holy one, and saidst, I have laid help upon one that is mighty; I have exalted one chosen out of the people." He was of the seed of David, yet refused to be called the son of David. By birth He was the Son of God as well as the seed of David; by resurrection He ceased to be the seed of David, having by glorification put off all that He inherited from him through the Virgin Mary; and was wholly the Son of God, because His humanity was Divine. He was the true Nazarite to God from His mother's womb. He came in the likeness of sinful flesh, being made in all things like unto His brethren, yet in His life He was holy, undefiled, and separate from sinners. As the Son of Mary He was one of us, as the Son of God He was infinitely superior to all finite beings. But although the humanity, inwardly Divine by conception, became wholly Divine by glorification, this does not destroy, but rather increases, His affinity to us. It does not make Him less but more human, and therefore brings Him nearer and closer to everything that is truly human in us, and enables Him to make us more and more like unto Himself, by which we have a nearer relationship to Him and more intimate conjunction with Him.

Solomon's temple, representing, in its highest sense, the Lord's Humanity, the Temple of His essential and eternal Divinity, the holy temple in which we are enabled to approach and worship Him as our Creator and Redeemer, it must be to the Christian a subject of the highest interest.

Yet the interest and instructiveness of the sacred edifice do not end here. While, in its highest sense, the temple is the symbol of the Lord's own glorious Body, it is also the symbol of His mystical Body, consisting of Heaven and the Church, and, still more particularly considered, the symbol of the regenerate man, as one in whose purified soul the Lord has His dwelling-place. Between these there is an analogy as well as a connection; for both the grand or greatest man, consisting of Heaven and the Church, and the least man, consisting of the regenerate mind, are the creations and the images of the Divine Man, as He exists and is known to us in the person of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Regarding this subject more especially as it relates to us as beings whom the Divine Architect ever desires to build up into temples of His Holy Spirit, we may with great advantage turn our attention to some of the leading parts of the inspired record, in which the building and dedication of the temple is described.

We need not enter very minutely into this subject. In its general arrangement, and in many of its particulars, the temple bears a close resemblance to the tabernacle of Moses; and this has been so minutely explained in the work of Swedenborg on Genesis and Exodus, that it would occupy space unnecessarily to enter into the details of a subject which any one can find minutely and luminously explained elsewhere. There are, however, differences as well as similarities between these two structures, both of which were no doubt built according to the pattern of things in the heavens; and these distinctions, as being intended for our instruction, it must be useful to consider.

In the previous chapter of this Book of Kings we find the work of preparation commenced on a scale of extraordinary magnitude. Hiram king of Tyre unites with Solomon in procuring and preparing the materials for the building of the Lord's house. More than a hundred and fifty thousand Israelites are employed, in conjunction with the Sidonians, of whom the number is not given, in preparing timber and stones to build the temple. The timber was of cedar and fir, and the stones were great stones, costly stones, hewed stones, to lay the foundation of the house.

The general difference between the tabernacle and the temple consisted in one being constructed of wood and the other of stone. This marks the general difference of their representative character, the tabernacle representing the Church as to the principle goodness,

and the temple the Church as to the principle of truth, or the celestial and spiritual worship of the Lord. But the distinction is marked by other differences. That chiefly employed in the construction of the tabernacle was shittim-wood, but in the temple were employed the olive, the cedar, and the fir. The shittah and the olive tree have nearly the same signification, both denoting, in the highest sense, the Lord's love to man, and, in the secondary sense, man's love to the Lord. But there is this difference between them, that shittim-wood signifies the Lord's merit in effecting the work of man's redemption, and which forms the ground of man's salvation. The tabernacle, which was set up while the Church was yet in the wilderness, passing through tribulation, points to the humanity of the Lord as present with us in the earlier period of the spiritual, and even of the natural life, but the temple represents the humanity of the Lord as it is with us in the more advanced stage of our spiritual journey, when rest is obtained, when the Lord reigns and His kingdom is established both in the heart and in the mind, in the outward as well as in the inward man.

It may, however, seem inconsistent that the temple, which is a symbol of what is spiritual, should come after the tabernacle, which represents what is celestial, and that the temple should have been built by Solomon. The tabernacle was reared during the government of the priesthood, and belongs, therefore, representatively, to the government of the Lord as the High Priest of His Church. The temple was built during the government of the kings, and therefore belongs, representatively, to the government of the Lord as the Kingly Ruler of His Church. The Lord's priestly government is His government by love, and His kingly government is His government by wisdom. But in the progress of regeneration, in its most comprehensive view, the government of love precedes the government of wisdom. Regeneration commences at birth, and the infant soul is first under the influence of love, and it is at a more advanced period and state of life that he comes under the direction of wisdom. The regenerating soul is therefore a tabernacle before he is a temple, or, the tabernacle of love is reared in his heart before the temple of wisdom is built in his understanding. The love that is first implanted in the human heart is also a tabernacle that is taken down. For the first love is not enlightened love, and therefore not real or perfect love. When the mind comes to be instructed in religious knowledge, early love passes into wisdom, as the tabernacle passed into the temple. For the temple was a more elaborate tabernacle; all the essentials of the tabernacle being reproduced in the temple. When early love has been bathed, where it has been for a time lost, in the ocean of light which is wisdom, it reappears purified and exalted. And now it is "a tabernacle that shall not be taken down; not one of the stakes thereof shall ever be removed, neither shall any of the cords thereof

be broken" (Isa. xxxiii. 20). And now the tabernacle appears again alone, and yet not alone; for in the holy city New Jerusalem, which represents the Church in its best state and the Christian life in its highest perfection, the Revelator says, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men. . . . And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it" (Rev. xxi. 3, 22). The temple, then, considered with reference to the advancing work of regeneration, no doubt represents the Church in its more complete development, and here the temple itself is identified with, or lost in, the glory of the Divine Humanity of the Lord. In the olive, the cedar, and the fir, we see the symbols of the three great and universal principles which constitute the Church in man, good celestial, spiritual, and the natural, or the good of love to the Lord, the good of charity to the neighbour, and the good of obedience to the Divine commandments. The stones of which the walls and especially the foundation of the house were formed, denote truth in its general acceptation, especially Divine truth as it is in the letter of the Holy Word, consisting of those universal truths which teach the essentials of all religion, the knowledge of God, of a life after death, of happiness as the result of goodness, and of misery as the consequence of evil. These are the great stones, the costly stones, the hewed stones, that form the foundation of the Church and heaven in every regenerate mind. Of these, the knowledge and practical acknowledgment of the Lord Jesus Christ as the only God and Saviour is the chief corner-stone, that sure foundation, on which if we build the Church, the gate of hell shall not prevail against it. But with all these foundation truths there must be combined that without which there is no solid or enduring foundation for the house of God within us; there must be obedience to the truth, otherwise our house is built upon the sand.

In the preparation of these materials, and in the more minute and elaborate decorations of the temple and its furniture, workmen of a different character were employed from those who had done the corresponding work of the tabernacle. In Exodus we read of no particular agents employed in procuring or preparing the wood for the tabernacle; but in preparing the gold and the silver and the brass, and cutting the precious stones to set them, and carving the timber, special and cunning workmen were employed. In this kind of work Moses engaged Bezaleel of the tribe of Judah, and Aholiab of the tribe of Dan. For similar work Solomon employed Hiram, a widow's son of the tribe of Naphtali, whose father was a man of Tyre. As Judah was the highest and Dan the lowest, in representative character at least, of the tribes of Israel, the two workmen belonging to them represented celestial wisdom, from its highest to its lowest, or from first to last, which engages in the work of constructing and adorning the mind, when it is formed into a tabernacle of the Lord. But when the mind is more

fully perfected, by being regenerated more fully, and formed into a temple of the Lord, agents having a more spiritual representation are employed. In the Scriptures Tyre signifies the knowledge of things spiritual, and when, as is frequently the case, Sidon is mentioned in connection with it, Tyre signifies interior, and Sidon exterior, knowledge. On account of this representative character of Tyre, Hiram, the king of that eminent commercial city, whose merchants were princes, assisted Solomon in procuring and preparing materials for building the house. The faculty of knowing goodness and truth is one which enables the regenerating Christian to procure and prepare the materials with which the mind is to be made a living temple, built up of living stones, and furnished with the means of serving the Lord.

The difference of the representative character of the Tyrians and the Sidonians is indicated in the different parts of the work which they are mentioned as performing. "There is not among us," said Solomon to Hiram, "any that can skill to hew timber like unto the Sidonians." The Sidonians are therefore mentioned as those who assisted Israel in bringing the wood from the forest of Lebanon, which represented the more external and general work of procuring the goods of spiritual and natural truth from the Word itself. But when the more interior and particular work of preparing the furnishings and decorations of the temple are spoken of, a man, the son of an Israelitish mother and a Syrian father, is mentioned. And as a man of Tyre signifies the knowledge of internal truth, and an Israelitish woman the spiritual affection of truth, he who is born of such a marriage must represent a principle or faculty which unites in itself the spiritual affection and the rational perception of the good and truth, that prepare us for the kingdom of heaven. The mother, too, was of the tribe of Naphtali; and this tribe represented the conjunction of goodness and truth, which is the heavenly marriage. Still more, Hiram, who adorned the temple, united in himself the Jew and the Gentile: and it may not be inconsistent with the representative character of the temple to suppose that Hiram's work foreshadowed the work of the Lord, by which His humanity became the means of uniting in one all the families of the earth, and truly making them not only of one blood, but of one spirit, the spirit of loving God above all things and each other as themselves. When the Lord shall be acknowledged in the Church universal as the Divine Man, the Pattern of all true humanity, and the Author of all that is truly human in man, then will the Lord be King over all the earth, and there shall be one fold and one Shepherd.

CHAPTER VII.

SOLOMON'S TEMPLE. THE CORRESPONDENCE OF ITS PRINCIPAL DIVISIONS.

1 *Kings* vi.

WE have already considered the subject of the temple, so far as relates to the materials of wood and stone of which that sacred edifice was constructed, and the agency by which the great work was commenced and carried on to its completion. We propose now to enter within its holy precincts, and trace the analogy of its principal divisions, furniture, and elaborate decorations.

Already have we pointed out the general representative meaning of this wonder of the ancient world. A type as it was in its highest sense of the Temple of the Lord's body, the Object and the Origin of all holy worship, it represented, in its secondary sense, Heaven and the Church, which are the Lord's mystical body, the grandest and the brightest image of Himself, and in its particular sense it was a symbol of the regenerate man, who is an image of the Lord, and a heaven in its least form. To complete the chain of representatives we must take in the written Word; but this is nearest to, and indeed identical with, the Incarnate Word, being the Divine Truth itself presented in another form.

The first great truth we learn from the division of the temple, as from that of the tabernacle, is one that lies at the foundation of all our knowledge both of the Infinite and of the finite whom they represented. The temple, like the tabernacle, consisted, we have seen, of three principal divisions. It had an inmost place, called the holy of holies, a second apartment called the holy place, and beyond this a court. This last part of the sacred enclosure was twofold, there being an inner and an outer court, the reason for which will appear as we proceed.

The great truth represented in this division of the temple is, that in the Divine Being, and thence in heaven and in man, there is a trine, a trinity in unity, which is the universal type of all perfection both in the Infinite and the finite. In the Divine Being from eternity, and still more fully in relation to us since the Incarnation, there is a trinity of Divine Essentials. Love, wisdom, and power form the trine which must have existed in God, or in which God must have existed, from all eternity. Since God became incarnate we recognise this same trinity in the Lord's Essential Divinity, His Divine Humanity, and His

proceeding Holy Spirit. These in the New Testament are called Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The Father is the Essential Divinity, or the Divine Love, the Son the Divine Humanity, or the Divine Wisdom, and the Holy Spirit is the Holy proceeding or the Divine Power. There is an apparent dissimilarity between these descriptions of the Divine Trinity, but there is none in reality. For it was the Divine Wisdom, or the Word, that was made flesh, and from the Word made flesh proceeds the Holy Spirit. From eternity God was not only a triune God, but He was a Divine Man. Before the Incarnation He was a Man in first principles; after that event He was a Man in last principles also. Before the Incarnation God was a Man chiefly as the Creator and Conservator; since the Incarnation He is Man as the Redeemer and Saviour also. Before the Incarnation God was the Divine Man as angels are finite men; after the Incarnation he was a Divine Man as we on earth are men. Before the Incarnation, therefore, God, when He appeared in person, assumed the angelic nature, being manifested in the spiritual form of an angel, which eminently was called the angel of His presence, and the angel of the covenant. When God became incarnate it was by assuming the human nature as it exists in the natural world, being born into the world as a man, the offspring of a human mother, though of a Divine Father. This humanity, born of a virgin mother on earth, and glorified by a Divine Father in heaven, and so made Divine even to the very ultimates called flesh and bones, is eminently the Temple of Jehovah: the one True Object of human faith and worship, the Lord Jesus Christ, in whose blessed and glorious Person is the Divine Trinity; three in one and one in three. The trinity in God does not consist of a tripersonality. The very nature of the Trinity is such, that if there were many Divine persons, no one of them could exist without having a trinity in himself; for no one of them could be a person without possessing the three essentials of love, wisdom, and power—or divinity, humanity, and operation. Trinity is as essential to a Divine existence as unity, and unity as trinity. The true doctrine of the Divine Trinity, so far from invalidating the doctrine of the Divine unity, confirms and exalts it; for the more clearly we see the distinction of the principles, the more clearly we see the unity of the person. The Divine Trinity, therefore, is not one God in three Divine persons, but one Person in three Divine Essentials: one Lord God, in whom we recognise our Creator, Redeemer, and Regenerator. "God is in His holy temple: let all the earth keep silence before Him."

This Divine Trinity in the One God, even from eternity, is the origin of the triune nature of all and everything in the realm of created existence. Throughout the whole of creation there is a resemblance,

an analogy, more or less distinctly marked, of the triune nature of its Divine original. Everything that exists has its essence, its form, and its use ; and these, even in the very lowest of created things, are the analogies or correspondents of love, wisdom, and power : for love is essence or life, wisdom is form or the manifestation of life, and use is power or the active and ultimate result of life. This trinity and unity must pervade the whole creation, since no created being, however exalted, and no created thing however low, could form part of a universe, in which God is present as in His grandest finite temple, unless each part were an image of the whole, and capable of being a receptacle of that one Life from which all live, of that one Wisdom from which all are formed or organized, of that one Operation from which all act.

In the universe, created after the image of God, as necessary to His presence therein, there are several different but kindred parts in which the Divine image is more perfectly displayed. Higher in the scale of finite existence, they are in closer connection with the Author of their being and Fountain of their life, and in them the Divine purpose in creation is more fully brought out and more perfectly realized. The purpose of God in creation was to rear up from among the human race a heaven of glorified spirits, that should be an image, ever increasing in fulness and perfection, of His own immensity, glory, and blessedness. This heaven is the higher temple of the Divine Presence ; and, considered in relation to it, and as parts of it, the regenerate are the living stones and other precious materials of which it is and will continue to be built up world without end. This heavenly temple has also its three mansions—its holy of holies, its holy place, and its outer courts. As there are three that bear record in heaven, so heaven itself is distinguished into three, of which number the Apostle Paul speaks, when he says he was caught up into the third. In these three we see the images and the receptacles of the Divine love, the Divine wisdom, and the Divine operation. The third or highest heaven is an image and receptacle of the Divine love, the second or middle heaven is an image and receptacle of the Divine wisdom, and the last or lowest heaven is an image and receptacle of the Divine power or operation. In the last or ultimate principle of every trine the two higher principles coexist in their fulness and in their power. The peculiarity of which we spoke regarding the court of the temple may now be seen with advantage. There were in fact two courts, which are mentioned as the inner and the outer court. The ultimate or lowest of the three heavens is also divided into two—not into two distinct heavens, but into two parts, corresponding to, and immediately communicating with, the two heavens which are above. The lowest heaven being the common basis of the other two, it communicates immediately with the highest or celestial heaven on the one hand, and with the middle or spiritual

heaven on the other. And as the ultimate heaven, in relation to the other two, is comparatively natural, and for the sake of distinction is called the natural heaven, the two parts into which it is divided are called the spiritual-natural and the celestial-natural heaven, and the angels which belong to or constitute them are also so distinguished.

But there is another peculiarity, another distinction, in the temple of the heavens which was represented by one that is mentioned in the temple of Solomon.

In the holy of holies of the symbolical temple was placed the ark containing the testimony—the two tables on which were written with the finger of God the ten commandments. These commandments represented the Lord Himself. The holy tables were deposited in the inmost of the temple to represent the Lord's more immediate presence in the inmost heaven. But for the tables of the law there was a receptacle within a receptacle. The law was within the ark, and the ark was within the holy of holies ; so above or within the highest heaven there is another heaven, called in the Writings of the Church the heaven of human internals. This is the inmost receptacle and highest residence of God with the angels of His kingdom, and indeed with all human beings ; for there is a region, or degree, or faculty in every human soul, be it the soul of angel, man, or demon, which is analogous to this inmost heaven, this heaven of heavens, and which forms a part of it, and in which the Lord has His immediate residence ; in virtue of which every soul has immortality, entirely independent of his finite will and wisdom. But this part of the analogy of heaven with the temple will be better seen by considering the correspondence of the temple with the individual man, as he is constituted by creation, especially as he is perfected by regeneration.

The truth that every less is an image of the greater, that even every least is an image of the greatest, is in no instance more perfectly exemplified than in the case of man. Man is the highest and most perfect individual image of his God ; and he is the nearest image of the universal heaven. He is the highest individual image of his God, because he was created to be the most perfect individual receptacle or recipient of a finite measure of the Infinite Principles, or Divine Essentials, that make up the very nature and person of God. God, we have seen, is Love itself, Wisdom itself, and Power itself ; and man was created to receive from God a finite measure of these infinite principles. We do not call them simply attributes ; they are the origin of all attributes, being in themselves the very Essentials of the Divine Essence, the Divine substance, and the origin of all others. As an image of God, man has a faculty for the reception of love from God, a faculty for the reception of wisdom from God, and a faculty for the reception and exercise of power from God. His faculty for the reception of God's love

is his will, his faculty for the reception of God's wisdom is his understanding, and the faculty for the reception of God's power is his ability or faculty of speaking and acting. Man is a *created* image simply in virtue of possessing these faculties. And as every one, except from accidental circumstances, inherits these faculties, every one is capable of receiving those spiritual and eternal gifts from his beneficent Creator and Redeemer. The impediments which the Fall introduced into the world to the reception of these gifts having been removed by the Lord's Incarnation and Redemption, all may freely receive what is now freely offered, love, and wisdom, and holiness, from the Saviour God. The actual reception of these makes man a spiritual image of his God—a new creature—a temple of the Lord's Holy Spirit—an image of the temple of the Lord's glorious Body—a little heaven, a resemblance of the greatest. Every one has within himself, in miniature, all that exists in the kingdom of heaven : by creation he has them potentially, by regeneration actually. The mind of every man consists of three distinct degrees, analogous to the three heavens ; and he enters, when he leaves this world, into that particular heaven, the analogue of which has been opened in himself during his residence on earth. These degrees respectively correspond to the court of the temple, the holy place, and the holy of holies. As in the universal heaven, so in the human mind, there are an inner and an outer court, surrounding the holy place, and an inmost receptacle of the Divine Testimony within the holiest place. The lowest mansion of the regenerate man, as a temple of God, consists of two parts, doing good and speaking the truth—a holy life and conversation. These also are the ultimates of a regenerate will and understanding ; for the new will is ultimated in good works, and the new understanding is ultimated in good words, or in doing and speaking the truth every man to his neighbour.

Within or above the holiest place in the human mind there is a higher region—a more transcendent faculty, in which the Eternal dwells alone. Into this human internal man never penetrates. It is above the sphere of his consciousness and beyond the limits of his power. However he may pervert or destroy the life of love and truth in the regions of his mind below, he cannot even disturb the order of this. God has mercifully reserved it for Himself. It is His high and holy place which man can never desecrate. Through it the Lord preserves in every one the faculties of liberty and rationality, as well as immortality ; and from that high and holy place He is ever ready to descend, when there is a contrite and humble spirit to receive Him. This impenetrable sanctuary of the Lord in the human mind is that of which Solomon speaks by the Holy Spirit in his dedication of the temple. The Lord said that He would dwell in the thick darkness. The highest human and angelic intelligence can never pierce the cloud that over-

hangs this secret place. There the Lord dwells in the thick darkness of His superhuman wisdom and overruling Providence. But in this as in all His dealings with His creatures His regard for their eternal interests is the ground of His economy. He conceals Himself from human wisdom and consciousness, that man may act from freedom according to reason, as if he were the author of the blessings he enjoys; and only leads him by *r velation* to see and acknowledge the operation of the hand which he can neither perceive by sense nor feel by consciousness.

To complete the series of analogies of what is Divine and spiritual in the temple of Solomon, it may be observed, in conclusion, that the Word of God is eminently the temple of the Lord. In this the Lord dwells both with angels and men—in heaven and in the Church. In the Word are three distinct senses, celestial, spiritual, and natural; but above the highest of these there is in it a sense purely Divine, which, like the human internal of man, is above the reach of the highest human intelligence.

Having traced the general correspondence of the temple which Solomon, by Divine appointment, built for the worship of Jehovah, we must reserve for another chapter a more minute delineation of the sacred edifice.

The treatment of the subject in the present chapter may perhaps seem to have too little tendency to edification. We are, however, to reflect that there is a wide difference between speculation and truth; and that while speculation may end in theory, truth has an invariable direction in the way of practical usefulness. That symbolism which leads us to look upwards to the Lord and inwards to ourselves, and that reflects some of the highest truths relating to the works of redemption and salvation, cannot fail to afford the means of improving the heart as well as of enlightening the understanding. When we look into the historical books of the Sacred Word, and find that they reveal some of the deepest mysteries of the kingdom of God under the form of the plainest narrative, our veneration for the inspired volume becomes increased, while our views of the kingdom itself become enlarged. When we view the temple of the Jews as symbolizing the Sacred Word in which the Lord dwells with His people, the human mind that has been formed by the principles of the Word into a habitation in which the Lord dwells, the angelic heaven where the Lord is ever in the midst, and above all, the Temple of the Lord's Humanity wherein all the fulness of the Godhead dwells—that Godhead which the heavens, even the heaven of heavens, cannot contain—our contemplation of so many correspondent and harmonious truths must, if we are disposed to be benefited, fill our hearts with gratitude, and lead us onward and upward in the way of improvement. Does not the contemplation of these truths teach us, that we must be fitted to enter into the universal

harmony which exists among the angels of heaven, and between them and the Author of their happiness, before we can enter into their habitations and participate in their joys? Does it not tell us that He who originally created us after His own image, now desires to re-create us after His own likeness; and that if we would become spiritual and living temples, we must follow in the footsteps of Him who built up the Holy Temple of His Divine Humanity in labour, and self-denial, and suffering, as well as in works of love and beneficence? He has now opened up a new and living way of access to Himself, as our Father, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh. We are able to enter even into the holy of holies. Further, the temple is now opened in heaven, and there is to be seen in heaven the ark of His Testament (Rev. xi. 19). The way is thus opened for the penitent and obedient to enter into the holiest of all. Let us strive to realize the Divine declaration: "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God" (Rev. xxi. 3).

CHAPTER VIII.

SOLOMON'S HOUSES.

1 Kings vii. 1-12.

THE Word of God being inwardly Divine and spiritual, every particular it contains is pregnant with purely religious instruction. The subjects of its historical records pass away—the shadowy dispensation itself, to which a great part of it relates, ceases to have a visible existence, but there arises out of the dead form of the literal history a living and eternal principle that points the way to heaven, whence the spirit descended that clothed itself with those transitory forms of material existence which are now only to be found, and will abide for ever with us, in the written Word. The temple of Solomon with all its magnificence has long since passed entirely away, the palaces which emulated the temple in grandeur have long ceased to exist; but they will continue to teach lessons of spiritual wisdom to the spiritually minded in all future ages of the world, as they will do for ever in the kingdom of heaven. In the glorious Temple of the Lord's Body the members of the Church militant and of the Church triumphant will see the grand antitype of the temple of Solomon, and will be able to trace the spiritual analogy through all the descending degrees of finite existence in its sanctified condition; for the Lord is the origin of all holiness, and His saving work on earth is the ground of all sanctification. "For their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also

might be sanctified through the truth." And what and where is the truth that sanctifies? Our Lord answers this question in the conclusion of His important declaration: "Thy Word is truth." This very Word, then, in which we find the history of a kingdom that has long since passed away, of a Church long since perished, is that in which we are to find the truth that alone can make us free.

Our reflections on the building of the temple of Solomon have led us to see by what means and in what way the Divine Being builds up His willing and obedient children into temples of His presence. The houses or palaces which the king built as his own habitations will lead us to reflect on a kindred subject. There is indeed an important distinction between them. The temple was built by Solomon as a house for God to dwell in, and where He might be worshipped; the palaces were built as habitations for himself and his wives. But as Solomon represented the Lord Jesus Christ as God in His Humanity, both the temple and the palaces must have relation to the same Divine Person. The temple represented the Lord in His priestly character, and the palaces represented the Lord in His kingly character. This is viewing the subject in its highest sense, in application to the Lord Himself. In its lower sense it refers to the regenerate man, who is the Lord's image; and in this sense it may be more profitable to consider it.

As the temple consisted of three great divisions, Solomon built three palaces. Between these there is an analogy. Both represent in their spiritual sense the regenerated human mind, as the dwelling-place of the love and truth of God; but they do not represent the subject under the same aspect, nor precisely as to the same distinctions. We have seen that the temple as consisting of three different parts represented the trine in the Lord, the three heavens, and the three degrees answering to them in the human mind, and also and eminently the three senses in the Word; in all of them termed celestial, spiritual, and natural. The three houses which Solomon built represent the mind under a different division of its faculties and the principles of which they are receptive: they represent the mind as consisting of the faculties of perception, of reason, and of science; or to express the same idea otherwise, they represent the mind as it consists of a spiritual, a rational, and a scientific faculty. The highest of these representatives is more intimately connected with that of the temple itself; and may be considered as involving the general signification of that holy edifice.

We proceed then to consider the description of these houses which Solomon built, with the view of tracing in that description the nature and spiritual formation of the faculties and principles of which they are the sacred symbols.

Solomon built his own house, the house of the forest of Lebanon, and the house for Pharaoh's daughter. Of the first house no description is given; we are simply informed that it was his own, or more especially for himself. And this mode of expression has no doubt been adopted in order that this house might represent the spiritual faculty itself—that faculty by which the mind has a perception of spiritual things, of the spiritual principles of goodness and truth; for Solomon represented these principles, he, more than any other king, representing the principles of the good and the true in a state of harmony and oneness.

The house of the forest of Lebanon bespeaks, by its origin, the nature of the faculty and the principle which it represents. As all places in the Holy Land were representative of faculties and states of the human mind, Lebanon represents the rational faculty. The trees of its forest were symbolical of the rational perceptions of truth and goodness, and the wood of the cedar-tree symbolized the good which is acquired by those perceptions. In harmony with this symbolical meaning of the cedar, we find that in the temple itself the cedar held a middle and appropriate place. The temple, built of stone, was lined with cedar-wood, which was overlaid with gold. The stone was outermost, the gold was innermost, and the cedar was between. For the temple itself, while, in its three divisions, it represented the three degrees of life in the Creator, and thence in all created beings—the celestial, spiritual, and natural—in its materials and structure, under a different threefold division, in its very walls consisting of stone, cedar-wood, and gold, it comprehended in itself that which the palaces of Solomon represented in a more outward and visible manner.

Besides the house of the forest of Lebanon, Solomon built a house for Pharaoh's daughter, whom he had taken to wife. In the third chapter we read that Solomon made affinity with Pharaoh king of Egypt, and took Pharaoh's daughter, and brought her into the city of David, until he had made an end of building his own house, and the house of the Lord, and the wall of Jerusalem round about. The representative character of Egypt, which occupies so conspicuous a place both in the historical and prophetic parts of the Word, shows us at once what the palace built for Pharaoh's daughter spiritually represented. For Egypt, wherever it is mentioned in Scripture, stands as a symbol of that faculty of the mind which may be called scientific, and which is aptly represented by Egypt, the grand refuge of primeval science—the science of spiritual things, the accumulated perfections of which existed in the science of correspondence, and the remains of which we see in the "wisdom" and the symbol-writing of the ancient Egyptians. It was on account of this representative character of Egypt that Abraham, the father of the faithful, visited Egypt, and that the

whole house of Jacob sojourned there, and it was for the same reason that our Lord Himself was carried down thither when an infant. In all these instances instruction and initiation into the science or knowledge of Divine and spiritual things was represented. The repetition of this sojourning points out the importance of the work or state which it represented. For science or knowledge forms the very foundation of the Church in the human mind. Nothing is effected in a state of ignorance; and all the Divine arrangements, both in nature and in revelation, have no other end than the instruction of the human mind, with a view to its regeneration. The human being is brought into the world only that he may be prepared for another. This is the sole end of his temporal existence; and all that exists around him, in the heavens, in the earth, and that is revealed to him in the written Word, is nothing but a means to this end. The human soul is brought into existence in a body endowed with senses, which are designed for nothing but to serve as avenues of knowledge, with its attendant delights, to the spiritual and immortal inhabitant within. Natural knowledge is the necessary precursor of spiritual truth. Nature is the gateway to revelation. And how beautifully is this seen to be provided for in the arrangements of infinite wisdom, when we know that nature and revelation, and that earth and heaven, are linked together by mutual correspondence. Heaven and earth are but the spiritual and material forms, because the outbirths, of the same Divine Word—that Word which was in the beginning, by or through which all things were made, and without which there was not anything made that was made. That Word of infinite wisdom that created them, put forth, and as far as possible embodied, its own sublime perfections in them; and when that Word came forth as a Divine revelation, it only expressed, in higher and more direct language, what nature itself declares when rightly interpreted. Not that nature can disclose the mysteries of life or immortality, or even reveal the existence of a Creator; but when these truths have been made known by Revelation, then does creation raise her voice in confirmation and illustration of the truth revealed. And it is in the knowledge of nature that the knowledge of revelation has its beginning and foundation. For this reason the nature of our being, and the requirements of our life, necessitate the precedence of the scientific element in the progress of human life. And when we speak of science we include all knowledge, even that which an infant learns on its mother's breast. But the science which forms the actual foundation of the spiritual life is the science of spiritual things; and it is this which is more especially understood by Egypt.

In order, then, to acquire this knowledge, which is introductory to spiritual life, and which forms the foundation on which religious truth rests, it is necessary to be inspired by the love of knowledge. The love

of knowledge, or the affection of science, was represented by Pharaoh's daughter whom Solomon took as a wife. The daughter of the Egyptian king was, so far as we read, the first of Solomon's wives, because she represented the first of the affections under the influence of which the mind is led to cultivate the means of spiritual and eternal life. The important part which this affection performs in building up the mind for heaven, by forming it into an image of heaven, is strikingly taught in a representative way in the history of Abraham. When Sarah was barren, she gave to Abraham Hagar her Egyptian handmaid, that she might have children by her ; but after the birth of Ishmael Sarah had a son of her own. In this way was it represented that the higher attainments of the spiritual life cannot be made but by means of the lower. This incident in the history of Abraham represents a truth similar to that symbolized in the history of Solomon. For in the history of Abraham, the Egyptian handmaid represented the affection of science, and Ishmael the first rational principle, which is natural ; while Sarah represents the affection of truth, and Isaac that rational principle which becomes the means of acquiring that which is truly spiritual.

There is thus a similarity in this respect between the history of Abraham and that of Solomon. But Scripture never repeats itself, although there are many resemblances, so many as to form a ground for the negative argument that one sacred writer borrows his ideas from another. In the history of Abraham the birth of the principles themselves is treated of ; Solomon is represented as providing habitations for them ; the building of his three palaces symbolizing the confirming and fixing in the mind by ultimating in the life, the principles previously acquired. Principles are first acquired in the internal man and are then ultimated and confirmed in the external.

The end of all true life is the building up of the mind into the form of heaven, which is the throne of God, and we may learn from this part of the sacred history how this is advanced and finally attained. There are three great stages in all intellectual advancement in the spiritual life. We must *know*, *understand*, and *see* the truth. The affection of knowing lies at the foundation of all true progress. We can only understand what we know, we can only perceive what we understand. The perception of truth is wisdom. But there is no wisdom which is not founded on knowledge and built up by reason. The love of knowledge, looking forward to the end of knowledge, which is wisdom, is the incipient love of wisdom, or the love of growing wise ; and this love lies at the very basis of all spiritual advancement.

Every one is born with the faculties of knowing, understanding, and perceiving the truth of heaven ; but these faculties have to be developed or built up by the orderly exercise of the powers inherited and the right and faithful use of the means provided. The worldly and theological

maxims of the dark ages—that ignorance is the mother of devotion, and that the understanding is to be kept under obedience to faith—are not less inconsistent with the nature of religion than of the human mind. Both live and grow and strengthen in the light and sunshine of the eternal truth. Any fears or maxims to the contrary must arise from the prevalence of darkness, which dreads the scrutiny that it deprecates.

In these days when the light of the moon has become as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun has become sevenfold as the light of seven days, there is no cause to dread the legitimate exercise of any of the mental faculties, but the greatest reason to invite and encourage the exercise of them all. When the Lamb had taken the book out of the hand of Him that sat upon the throne, as He opened the seven seals with which it had been closed for long centuries, each of the four beasts said, "Come and see." The Word of life is now indeed unsealed. Its internal sense is now laid open. The mystic horses have come forth; and these symbols of the understanding of the sacred oracles have been sent forth by Him who is the Word of God itself, and who, as the Word, has come to restore the great charter of man's spiritual liberty; and those who are disposed to behold the truth as now made known are invited to come and see. If the sight which is now opened to us by the unfolding of the Divine Word be followed by religious practice, our minds will be formed into the image of heaven. That heavenly form which religion impresses on the mind comprehends in itself every particular form of beauty and use. But the particulars which are contained in the account of the palaces of Solomon, especially that of the forest of Lebanon, which is more fully described, will be explained in a future chapter. Here we have only attempted a general exposition.

In this chapter we have proceeded on the understanding that the three houses, the king's own house, the house of the forest of Lebanon, and the house for Pharaoh's daughter, were regal palaces, distinct from the temple, the house of the Lord. In this we seem to differ from a high authority. In the "Apocalypse Explained," No. 654, we read that "whereas every man has a spiritual, a rational, and a natural mind, therefore Solomon built three houses, the house of God, or the temple, for the spiritual mind, the house of the forest of Lebanon for the rational, and the house for the daughter of Pharaoh for the natural." The author here speaks of the temple as one of the three houses that Solomon built, the other two being the house of the forest of Lebanon and the house for Pharaoh's daughter. To make the temple one of the three houses, we must understand the king's own house (chap. vii. 1) to mean the temple. But the king's house is evidently distinguished from the temple, not only by its being called Solomon's own house, but by the greater length of time it was in building. The temple was

built in seven years (vi. 38), but the building of Solomon's house occupied thirteen years (vii. 1), and we find these two periods afterwards combined : " It came to pass at the end of *twenty* years, when Solomon had built the two houses, the house of the Lord, and the king's house," etc. (chap. ix. 10.)

CHAPTER IX.

THE VESSELS OF SOLOMON'S TEMPLE, MADE BY HIRAM.

1 *Kings* vii. 13-51.

IN our reflections on the temple of Solomon we have endeavoured to trace the spiritual analogy of that gorgeous edifice with the Temple of the Lord's Body, the Divine Word, heaven, the church, and the regenerate mind. The Temple of the Lord's glorified Humanity is the Divine pattern and the infinite origin of all that is truly human in heaven and on earth ; and in the chain of dependence from Him, who sustains both the spiritual and the material universe, we are enabled to see His image in all that is in the order of His creative wisdom and saving providence. In tracing the analogy of the temple with the Lord Himself, we fix our mind for the time upon the highest truth which it represents, and which, being the highest, enters into all the others.

There is one part of the temple of Solomon which, to be seen in its full import in relation to us, must first be viewed in its typical relation to the Lord. Solomon cast two pillars of brass, eighteen cubits high apiece, with chapiters five cubits high, and nets of checkerwork ; and he set them in the porch of the temple, and He called the one Jachin, and the other Boaz.

These two pillars seem to have been an addition to the temple, considered as a more permanent form of the tabernacle ; and it has been conjectured that they were intended to represent the pillar of the cloud and the pillar of fire, which may be considered as the pillars of the tabernacle, while the children of Israel journeyed with it through the wilderness. This is not grounded in any law or perception of spiritual analogy, but only in a perception of outward or nominal similitude. Still it may be admitted that the pillar of fire by night and the pillar of cloud by day had a similar representative character to the two great pillars that adorned the entrance of Solomon's temple. The pillars of the temple were natural, the pillar of fire and pillar of cloud were supernatural ; and the fiery and cloudy pillar which, like the food of Israel in the desert, was given from heaven, represented the same

protective, guiding, and sustaining power as the people enjoyed in a more fixed and material form, when they had entered and become established in their promised inheritance.

The temple of Solomon representing the Divine Humanity of the Lord, the two pillars of brass that stood in the porch represented the Divine natural principle of the humanity. We are instructed in the Writings of the New Church respecting this heavenly mystery, that in the Lord from eternity there were the Divine celestial and the Divine spiritual actually, and there was also the Divine natural potentially. And it was to put on the Divine Nature actually that the Lord came into the world, and was born of a human mother. Before the Incarnation the Lord was indeed human, but He was human in the degrees that angels are human, who, as departed men, have left their natural bodies in the natural world. By incarnation the Lord became a man in the degree that we are men, who, while we possess the higher degrees of human nature in common with angels, have that degree which they have for ever laid aside. *Our* consciousness is in the natural world, *theirs* is in the spiritual ; and it was to bring Himself, with His regenerating love and truth, down to the sphere of our consciousness, and make Himself an object of our natural apprehension and reception that the Lord became a man like ourselves ; and through the humanity which He assumed and glorified on earth, He is with us always even unto the end of the world.

It is needful to direct our minds thus far to this profound but important subject, for the purpose of showing how this great truth enters into the representatives of the Israelitish Church, and is presented symbolically in the Divine Word. For the truth represented by the two brazen pillars of Solomon's temple was presented in vision to the seers of the Old and New Testament.

In Ezekiel (chap. i.) the Lord's providence is described by the cherubim, who are said to have the likeness of a man, and their feet were straight feet : and they sparkled like the colour of burnished brass. In Daniel (chap. x.) Jehovah Himself is described as a man, whose body was like the beryl, and His face as the appearance of lightning, and His eyes as lamps of fire, and His arms and His feet like in colour to polished brass. But in Revelation (chap. i.) this representation is brought out still more clearly and fully. There, John, in the Spirit, sees Jesus as the Divine Man, " clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle : His head and His hairs white like wool, as white as snow, and His eyes as a flame of fire ; and His feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace."

In all these instances the Divine natural principle of the Lord is described or represented. That principle is especially signified by His feet ; and these are said to have the appearance of brass, because

brass is the symbol of natural good, or good in the natural degree ; and this brass is said to have a burning and burnished appearance, its burning appearance indicating that that good in the Lord was filled with the ardency of the Divine love, and its brightness indicating that it was filled with the light of the Divine wisdom.

The representative meaning of the two pillars of Solomon's temple is further indicated by their names. The right pillar was called Jachin, and the left was called Boaz. The one name expresses stability and the other strength. And these names express precisely what was accomplished by the Lord's assuming and glorifying the natural degree of humanity. Stability and power are in ultimates ; and the Lord's becoming man in ultimates, as He had from eternity been in first principles, brought down His power to the uttermost of human need, and provided for the stability of all things, spiritual and material. To the first of these our Lord referred when He said, "All power is given unto Me in heaven and on earth." To the second He alluded when He said to Peter, who had confessed Him to be the Son of God : "On this rock I will build My Church ; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." The glory of Christianity and the hopes of the world rest on the grand truth that the Son of Man has all power—that the Divine power is brought down to the lowest affections and perceptions of the human mind, not merely through heaven, or by the agency of angelic ministration, but immediately through the Humanity of the Lord—the veritable Son of Man. The love and truth of God thus ultimated are the 'very pillars of heaven and the church, and consequently of the universe itself ; for, as we are again instructed, unless the Lord had come into the world no flesh could have been saved, nor could heaven have remained in a state of integrity. The Lord's coming prevented universal ruin ; and the pillars of the temple—the temple of His humanity, of heaven, and the Church—which were then set up, will remain in their strength and stability for ever.

But not only the names but the place of the pillars of Solomon's temple indicates their meaning. The pillars were set up in the porch, through which there was entrance into the temple. And in harmony with this situation of the pillars the Lord says of Himself, "I am the door of the sheep : by Me if any man enter in, he shall go in and out, and find pasture." The Divine natural of the Lord is the door : "No man cometh unto the Father, but by Me." There is no means of entrance into the church or into heaven but by the Humanity of the Lord, therefore except by the acknowledgment of Jesus as the God of heaven and earth, the Saviour of mankind. Not that He excludes those who either do not know or worship Him by name ; but without that state from which acknowledgment springs there can be no admission. Children, who know little or nothing of the Saviour, are yet justly

regarded as within the pale of the Church, and those who die in childhood are admitted into heaven; yet they do not actually form a part of the Church or heaven, until they have entered by the knowledge and practical acknowledgment of their Lord and Saviour. Acknowledgment of heart constitutes that state which is essential to the existence and stability of heaven and the Church.

Besides the brazen pillars of the temple there are some other important parts of the sacred edifice, or things connected with it, which demand our attention. Among these was the brazen sea, which stood upon twelve oxen. In this sea the priests were required to wash before they entered into the temple or made offerings to Jehovah upon the altar. In this vessel for purification, considered in relation to the Lord, we see a representation of Himself as the truth which purifies from sin, a type of that of which Zechariah speaks: "In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness" (xiii. 1). The brazen sea was a symbol of the Divine natural principle of the Lord as to truth, by which there is purification from spiritual uncleanness. It is called a sea, because a sea signifies Divine truth in its fulness, and therefore in its power. This sea was contained in a brazen vessel, to represent truth grounded in goodness; and the vessel contained two thousand baths, to indicate that purification has for its end the renewal of man both as to his intellectual and voluntary life. The sea stood upon twelve oxen, to signify that Divine truth in the natural mind must rest upon and be supported by all the good natural affections, which are symbolized by oxen.

Besides the molten sea there were ten lavers on ten bases, and each of these contained forty baths. These lavers, like the sea, represented the receptacles of truth in the natural mind, but they represented receptacles of a lower order, or of a more external kind. There are in the mind various receptacles of truth, or what is the same, truth is differently perceived in the different degrees of the mind—for example, in the sensuous and the rational. The sensuous is the lowest degree of the natural mind, and the rational is the highest. Both the molten sea and the lavers of brass denote receptacles of truth in the natural mind, and indeed the sensuous degree of that mind; but the ten lavers represented the very lowest receptacles, such as they are in the senses themselves. Thus the water in these lavers denote truth as it comes down to the very lowest degree of sensual apprehension. And what is the meaning of this typical arrangement for washing those who entered into the temple? It means that no thoughts and feelings ought to be admitted into the mind from the world without, no desires should be allowed to pass from the flesh into the spirit, without being purified by Divine truth, so that their natural or hereditary defilements may be

removed. Worldly and sensual things are continually flowing into our minds, for we are surrounded by them; and to represent this, the twelve oxen were placed under the sea looking to the four cardinal points.

The means of such purification, as represented by the sea and the lavers of the temple, are provided in their greatest possible fulness in the Christian Church, because the Lord has Himself become the Laver of regeneration. But they do not so exist to us in a practical way until our own minds have become receptacles of heavenly truth, and until that truth has been employed for the purification of the desires and affections of our minds, even the most external. Therefore the brazen sea, in reference to us, represents the natural mind itself, as the recipient of truth, and the truth of which it is receptive. And the molten sea, for containing the water, was made of brass, to teach us that good is the receptacle of truth. Brass is the symbol of good, as water is of truth. The good signified by brass is that which is called natural good. It is not, however, that which is hereditary, or those good natural dispositions which every one more or less inherits from his parents. These natural inclinations are not, strictly speaking, human, but are similar to those of the gentler animals, and were therefore represented by the twelve oxen that supported the brazen sea. The natural goodness represented by the brazen sea is that which has a spiritual origin, and is religious, and therefore human, goodness. This acquired goodness rests upon hereditary goodness, as the brazen sea rested upon the twelve oxen. The human being inherits evil as well as good dispositions from his parents, but the evil form no actual basis for acquired goodness. Evil and falsehood can afford no basis or support for goodness and truth. Hatred cannot support love, anger mercy, or envy benevolence. Not the ferocious tiger or the treacherous leopard, but the gentle ox was the chosen support for the brazen sea. And thus would the Divine Oracles teach us that not the ferocious and treacherous, but the gentle and docile, dispositions of the natural mind, are those which can supply a basis for the good which, natural in its degree, is spiritual in its origin. Spiritual dispositions are ingrafted upon those which are natural. But there must be a similarity of nature between the scion and the stock in order that the one may be grafted on the other. The cultivated may be grafted on the wild, but it must be on one of the same kind, not on one of a diverse kind. So with renewing of the life of man. The Divine Husbandman desires to renew us by imparting to us of His own nature; but He cannot ingraft a scion from the tree of life except on some corresponding stock in our own natural minds. And in this case He ingrafts it on that which is His own; for every good natural disposition is originally from Him, and is a survival of something of that which originally belonged to man, when God beheld all that He had

made, and behold it was very good. That which God the Creator originally did, God the Redeemer desires again to do. He desires to restore us to a state of holiness, that He may restore us to a state of happiness. He desires to find in us some natural goodness, that He may found upon it the brazen sea that will contain the water of purifying truth, in which we may wash and be clean, and so be fit for entering into His presence, and worship in His holy temple.

One singular circumstance connected with the building of the temple is deserving of our particular attention. "The house, when it was in building, was built of stone made ready before it was brought thither : so that there was neither hammer nor ax nor any tool of iron heard in the house while it was in building" (vi. 7). This absence of the sound of any tool in the house, though not required by any direct command, was no doubt ordered in conformity with what had taken place in the construction of the tabernacle, and with a very strict prohibition respecting the building of the altar. The tabernacle being of wood, and intended to be set up when the congregation rested, and taken down when they journeyed, it was necessary that the planks should be separated, shaped, and so formed as to be capable, without further preparation, of being united into a complete habitation. But this necessity did not naturally belong to the altar, to which the prohibition against the use of any tool was so strictly applied. It was a command to Moses, immediately connected with the giving of the law of the decalogue, "An altar of earth thou shalt make unto Me, and shalt sacrifice thereon thy burnt-offerings, and thy peace-offerings, thy sheep, and thine oxen : in all places where I record My name I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee. And if thou wilt make Me an altar of stone, thou shalt not build it of hewn stone : for if thou lift up thy tool upon it, thou hast polluted it" (Exod. xx. 24, 25). There is nothing but conjecture to guide us in an effort to discover a reason affecting the Israelites themselves in regard to this stringent law. It is supposed to have been intended to prevent them from following a practice of the heathen nations around them. But if we cannot find a sufficient reason for the law in regard to the altar, and for the observance in regard to the temple, we are supplied with a very adequate one in regard to that which the altar and the temple represented. If the letter affords little light or instruction on the subject, the spirit supplies us abundantly with both. In the Writings of the Church it is explained clearly and practically :—

"The altar, and afterwards the temple, were in an especial manner representative of the Lord as to Divine goodness and Divine truth, wherefore the stones of which they were built signified the truths of doctrine, of religion, and of worship. That nothing of self-derived intelligence should accede to the truths of doctrine and worship

derived from the Word, and consequently be in them, was represented by the stones being whole, and not hewn, of which the temple and the altar were built. For the work of the workmen and the artificer signified such intelligence. The tools also, as the hammer and the axe, and the iron in general, signified such truth in its ultimate form, and this is especially falsified by the selfhood of man, for this truth is the same as the literal sense of the Word. The truths from which the Lord is worshipped ought to be taken from the Word, for in everything of the Word there is life from the Divine Being, from whom they are. When truths are taken from the selfhood, they respect and have for their end dignity and eminence over all in the world, and also the possession of the earth and opulence above all, wherefore they have in them the love of self and of the world, thus all evils collectively; but truths from the Word respect and have for their end eternal life, and have in them love to the Lord and love to the neighbour, thus all good collectively. When truths are hatched from the selfhood or from one's own intelligence, they domineer over the truths that are Divine in their origin, for these are applied to confirm the others, when yet the truths which are from the Divine Being ought to have the dominion, and those which are from self-intelligence ought to serve. We speak of those which are of self-intelligence as truths, but they are not truths, they only appear as truths in the external form, for they are only rendered like truths in the external form by applications from the literal sense of the Word, while in the internal form they are falsities.

“What is derived from self-intelligence in itself is void of life, nay, is spiritually dead; for the selfhood of man is nothing but evil. If, therefore, Divine worship be performed from the selfhood, that worship is nothing more than as the worship of a graven or molten idol, in which there is no spirit, that is, no life. What, on the contrary, is from the Word, is serviceable for Divine worship, because in itself it is alive. For inwardly in every particular of the Word there is a spiritual sense which treats of the Lord's kingdom, and within that sense there is a Divine sense, which treats of the Lord alone. From this and from no other source are the life and sanctity of the Word. The Word is as a Divine Man. The literal sense is, as it were, His body, and the spiritual sense is, as it were, His soul. Hence it is evident that the literal sense lives by the internal sense. It would appear as if the literal sense vanishes and dies by the internal sense; on the contrary, it does not vanish, still less die, but by the internal sense lives. From these considerations it is now manifest that worship truly Divine exists from those truths which are from the Word, and in no case from those which originate in self-derived intelligence. Hence it is that the expression, ‘If thou lift up thy tool upon the altar thou shalt profane it,’ signifies that in case thou devise such things as belong to

Divine worship, not deriving them from the Word but from self-intelligence, there is no worship. And so of the temple, in which no sound of hammer or of axe or any tool of iron was heard during the time it was in building."

CHAPTER X.

SOLOMON'S PRAYER AT THE DEDICATION OF THE TEMPLE.

1 Kings viii.

THE ceremonial by which the temple of Solomon was dedicated to the name and the service of God is one of the grandest recorded in the Scriptures: it was not unworthy of the splendid edifice it was designed to consecrate, and a not unfitting homage to the Great Being for whose glory it had been reared. All the great and venerable in the congregation were then assembled to do honour to so grand an occasion, and thousands from all parts of the land formed the vast multitude of worshippers, while the wisest and richest of the kings of Israel presided over the whole. Yet, grand and imposing as the ceremonial was, considered as a whole, it was essentially Jewish in its character. The long line of priests carrying the ark of the Lord, and the tabernacle of the congregation, and the holy vessels that were in the tabernacle, and the slaying of sheep and oxen that could not be told or numbered for multitude, formed a spectacle and a religious service that were adapted only to produce a holy impression on the mind of one who lived under a dispensation that was typical and shadowy. In the magnificent address and prayer of Solomon there are indeed, even in the plain literal sense, some great truths—truths that belong exclusively to no one age or dispensation, but are of universal application. The infinity of God—His omnipresence, omniscience, and omnipotence are clearly and powerfully expressed; sin, repentance, and forgiveness are fully recognised; and the Divine clemency and mercy are acknowledged as abounding to the penitent. While, in the fulness and fervour of his pious joy, Solomon was able to say, "I have surely built Thee an house to dwell in, a settled place for Thee to abide in for ever;" his just views of the Divine immensity led him to exclaim, "But will God indeed dwell on the earth? behold, the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain Thee; how much less this house that I have builded?" Entreating the Divine forgiveness for the sins of his people, he regards actual sinfulness as not only a possibility, but as an unavoidable result of the condition of our nature as fallen creatures; and this condition is such, that there is no man that liveth and sinneth

not. And when praying the Divine justice to give to every man according to his ways, he trusts, for an unerring judgment, to the searching truth, "Thou, even Thou only, knowest the hearts of all the children of men." Still, notwithstanding these admirable marks of catholicity, by which the address and prayer of Solomon are distinguished, considered as a whole it is essentially Jewish. It is not unreasonable, but rather necessary, to suppose that his views of the immensity of God, of the nature of sin and forgiveness, partook of the character of the Church to which he belonged, in which Divine truths of every kind were but dimly perceived. The general tenor of the prayer justifies this conclusion, and shows that a temporal idea pervades the whole. He speaks of human sinfulness and of Divine forgiveness; but both the calamities and the blessings are of the body and the world. Spiritual life and immortality, future happiness or misery, have no place in it.

But is this grand and solemn service less deserving our attention, and less instructive to us, on this account? Could we look no deeper than the surface—were we able to take no more unworldly a view of the subject than did those who took a part in the august solemnity, it would profit us but little. But when we are able to see that under the outward grandeur of the letter there lies a series of truths, spiritual, heavenly, and practical, which tends to true edification in the highest Christian principles, the whole ceremonial assumes a new aspect. Under the splendid Jewish garb we are able to discern a living Christian form, displaying the grace and breathing the spirit of heavenly and eternal life. It is therefore to direct attention to this "body," so much more to us than the "raiment" that covers it, that we purpose to enter on the consideration of the dedication service of the temple of Solomon.

In the first place we have to recall the typical character of the temple itself. We have to think of the temple of Solomon as representative of the temple of the Lord's body. This is the temple of which Jehovah has said, "My name shall dwell there;" this is the habitation of which Solomon, speaking in the name of the Messiah, could truly say, "I have surely built Thee an house to dwell in, a settled place for Thee to abide in for ever;" and it is to this house that the eyes of Jehovah are open day and night. In this glorious temple the Infinite and Eternal, otherwise invisible and incomprehensible, is to be approached and worshipped as the visible God. It was for this reason—to represent this all-important truth—that the children of Israel were not permitted to offer sacrifice in any other than the one appointed place—in the house where the holy ark dwelt in the thick darkness, under the overshadowing cherubim. But still more to our present purpose, it was towards this house that every Israelite in his own distant dwelling turned his face when he offered his thanksgivings or addressed his prayers to his God,

who had there inscribed His name. This he did, whether in freedom in his own land, or in captivity in the land of an enemy. So we find Daniel, with the windows of his chamber open towards Jerusalem, kneeling upon his knees three times a day, and praying and giving thanks to God.

To God in the Holy Temple of His Divine Humanity His people are to turn in heart and mind when they pray and give thanks—when they supplicate the Divine mercy or praise the Divine bounty. As the Israelite turned the eyes of his body to the holy hill whence came his aid, the Christian is to turn the eyes of his mind to Him that is able to succour him in all his trials, to strengthen him in all his weakness, and deliver him out of all his distresses.

The circumstances in which the Divine aid is to be sought are as various as the states and experiences of human life—more especially those of the Christian life, considered as the life that is to be formed and matured by labours and trials as well as by tranquil study and virtuous enjoyment. The present subject leads us to consider these circumstances as described in the prayer of Solomon.

In the prayer of Solomon there are seven different petitions, relating to as many different circumstances, six relating to the Israelites themselves, and one to the sojourner that is amongst them. The first petition is for him who trespasses against his neighbour; the second is for the people when smitten in battle; the third is for relief when the heaven is shut up because there is no rain; the fourth is for succour when famine is in the land; the fifth is for the sojourner; the sixth is for success in divinely sanctioned wars; and the seventh is for the people when they have been carried into captivity. In every series of events or circumstances that occurs in the Divine Word there is a connection between the parts, however independent of each other they may be in the historical relation. The circumstances or conditions of the people which are enumerated in this prayer, in which the Divine aid is implored for those who see their sins, and repent, and turn in earnest supplication to God in His temple, describe states of the spiritual life that follow in succession during the progress of regeneration. It may not be essentially necessary to see this connection to derive instruction from the several petitions. Our various individual states may find in some one of the circumstances something that comes home more immediately and forcibly to ourselves; but if there is nothing in our own hearts or understandings, in our words or works, that strike us, while considering these petitions, with a sense of sin or a feeling of penitence, we may be sure that the train of spiritual ideas that the series contains will afford us little satisfaction or yield us little profit of a spiritual kind. Trusting, however, that our contemplation of these various petitions may find for them an inward witness and response,

we will proceed to consider them at such length as our space will permit.

1. In his first petition Solomon prays, "If any man trespass against his neighbour, and an oath be laid upon him to cause him to swear, and the oath come before Thine altar in this house : then hear Thou in heaven, and do, and judge Thy servants, condemning the wicked, to bring his way upon his head ; and justifying the righteous, to give him according to his righteousness." This petition evidently refers to the law delivered in the twenty-second chapter of Exodus, in which it is enacted, that if any one delivers any thing or beast to his neighbour (or companion) to keep, and it be stolen, or be driven away, or die, no man seeing it, "an oath of the Lord shall be between them, that he hath not put his hand unto his neighbour's goods." That which is given by one man to another to keep is that which has been given by the 'internal to the external man, and is laid up in the mind as a means of preserving and supporting the spiritual life of the soul. This may be lost, or may pass away from the mind, which may result either from evils of intention or evils of infirmity. When the question is brought to God, or submitted to the decision of Divine Truth, a true judgment is obtained. If it has proceeded from an evil intention, and thus from wickedness, the evil is seen and condemned ; but if it has only proceeded from infirmity, or has resulted from error of judgment, no wickedness is imputed. The case supposed by Solomon seems, however, to refer further to a judgment between two, one of whom has actually trespassed against his neighbour ; and the Divine decision brings to light the guilt of the one and the righteousness of the other. Such a Divine judgment is that which enables us to distinguish and to separate between good and evil, and truth and falsity in ourselves. And this is the first act of saving truth in the mind that has entered on the regeneration. The unregenerate have no clear distinction between spiritual good and evil in themselves. They call that good which they love, and that truth which favours their own ends ; and on the other hand they call that evil which they do not love, and that falsity which is unfavourable to their own ends. It is Divine Truth alone—it is God—that enables us to see what is evil in itself and what is good in itself ; for that only is good which comes from God and leads to Him, and that is evil that comes from self and leads to self. The first of our petitions to the throne of grace should therefore be, to receive into our minds the judgment of eternal truth, which will enable us to distinguish and to sever between the righteous and wicked in ourselves.

2. Although the first act of the spiritual life is to distinguish and to sever between good and evil in the judgment, many other acts are required before they can be entirely and finally separated in the life.

Evils, although seen and acknowledged, cannot be removed but by actively resisting them, and this resistance is compared in Scripture to a warfare. The second petition of Solomon, therefore, has relation to the people when contending with and smitten down before the enemy. In our first conflicts with the enemy of our own heart, we fight very much in our own strength, and in the confidence of the victory, and thus sin against Him who alone can strengthen us with strength in the inner man to overcome our corruptions. Our weakness is made manifest to us by defeat ; and defeat begets humility and dependence. When we turn from ourselves to the Lord, and confess His name, and pray, and make supplication unto the Lord in His house, then does He hear and forgive, and bring us again into the land that He gave unto our fathers, by bringing us into some degree of spiritual goodness, as the result of submission to the will and wisdom of our Divine Deliverer. In the earlier states of the religious life there is inexperience of the difficulties and dangers attending real progress in truth and goodness. For these principles have not only to be known and understood, but to be made our own by being admitted into the life of the understanding and will. They are not received into the inner life without trial and temptation respecting them. These temptations are described in the next two subjects of Solomon's prayer. Truth and good are the water and the bread of the soul's true life ; and a famine for bread and water are spiritually famine for the inward spiritual hearing of the Word of God.

3. Solomon therefore prays, "When heaven is shut up, and there is no rain, because they have sinned against Thee ; if they pray, hear Thou in heaven, and give rain upon Thy land." And again—

4. "If there be in the land famine, if there be pestilence, blasting, mildew, locust, or if there be caterpillar ; if their enemy besiege them in the land of their cities ; whatsoever plague, whatsoever sickness there be ; what prayer and supplication soever be made by any man, or by all Thy people Israel, which shall know every man the plague of his own heart, and spread forth his hands toward this house : then hear Thou in heaven Thy dwelling-place, and forgive, and do, and give to every man according to his ways, whose heart Thou knowest."

Heaven is shut up, and no rain descends to refresh the earth, when the inner man is either temporarily or permanently closed, and no truth flows down into the outer man to refresh and fructify him. When this continues, famine, or defect of goodness, must follow, for a defect of the one produces a defect of the other. But when good fails, how many evils spring up to desolate the mind ! With the want of rain no other evil is connected in the prayer of Solomon ; but when famine is the subject, pestilence, blasting, mildew, caterpillar, and the besieging army follow in its train. Goodness is the staff of spiritual life ; and

when this fails, the gate is opened for the entrance of every pestilential, consuming, and destructive principle. Above all things is it, then, important for every man to know the plague of his own heart ; and this we do spiritually when we know not only our general sinfulness, but our particular evils, and include that knowledge in the general confession of our sinfulness.

5. Those experiences which give the mind a sense of its inherent deficiencies in goodness and truth, inspire it with a desire to increase in the knowledge of these essential elements of eternal life. One who desires to be instructed in the knowledge of these principles, and, in the abstract sense, the desire itself to receive instruction, is signified by a sojourner ; for those who came from a far country for the Lord's name's sake were in search of the wisdom which the children of Israel possessed. The fifth petition of Solomon's prayer is, therefore, for the sojourner, that the Lord might do for him, when he prayed towards the temple, all that he might call for. And the object of this request was not merely for the sake of the sojourner himself, but "that all people of the earth might know the name of the Lord, and fear Him, as the people Israel;" that is, that the influence of the Divine love and wisdom may be diffused over the whole mind—that the whole natural mind may yield a willing obedience to the Lord's will, as well as the spiritual.

6. The sixth petition of the prayer of Solomon has, like the second, relation to war, but in this instance the people are spoken of as going out to battle against their enemy by the command of the Lord—"whithersoever Thou shalt send them." And here the prayer is that the Most High will maintain their cause, when they pray towards the city which the Lord had chosen and the house that had been built for His name.

7. The seventh petition has also relation to war ; but the prayer in this is on behalf of the people when they sin, and when the Lord is angry with them, and delivers them to the enemy, so that they carry them away captives unto the land of the enemy far or near. If they bethink themselves and repent, and make supplication, the Lord is entreated, not only to forgive them, but to give them compassion before them that carried them away. All this literally happened to the people afterwards, when they were carried away captive into Babylon. And this captivity, like that of Egypt, represented the complete end of one state ; and their deliverance and re-establishment in their own land represented the beginning of another. The Divine Being by whose inspiration Solomon delivered that beautiful prayer at the dedication of the temple foresaw the captivity of the people which was thus comprehended in it. But as that captivity was representative of the last and severest temptation which the spiritual undergo, in one state and stage of the new life, and through which they pass into another, it

formed the last subject of that supplication which was designed to include all possible states in which the mind can feel the necessity of drawing near to God and seeking conjunction with Him. And here it is not deliverance that is immediately prayed for, but the compassion of their enemies towards them ; as if the last stage was to subdue enmity itself, and turn their very captivity into freedom and their sorrow into joy.

When Solomon had made an end of praying, he rose from before the altar of the Lord from kneeling on his knees, with his hands spread up to heaven, and he stood and blessed all the congregation of Israel with a loud voice. One part of that blessing may well form the subject of our ardent desires : "The Lord our God be with us ; let Him not leave us, nor forsake us : that He may incline our hearts unto Him, to walk in all His ways, and to keep His commandments."

God is indeed with us in His Holy Temple : let it be our earnest desire that He may incline our hearts unto Him, to walk in all His ways—those ways that He has Himself walked in while Himself a sojourner on the earth. These are ways of self-denial, integrity, holiness, meekness, mercy. He learned obedience by the things that He suffered. He fought, He thirsted, He hungered, He was led into captivity, even becoming captive to the last enemy, which is death. His captivity was but the last stage of His earthly life, and was the gate of His glorious resurrection, by which He overcame death, and became, even as to His humanity, life itself, and the Author of life, spiritual and eternal, to all who follow Him in the regeneration.

If the Jews rejoiced at the consecration of the temple in which the Divine name might dwell in the midst of them, infinitely more may we rejoice that the Lord has opened up for us a new and living way of access to Himself, which He hath consecrated through the evil, that is to say, His flesh. And if their fidelity and obedience were to be made more perfect as an offering of gratitude and a means of protection and blessing, immeasurably more should ours become so, when we have so much more to call forth our gratitude, and far more precious blessings to secure. While we offer up to our merciful Saviour the sacrifices of Praise and Thanksgiving, for grace so free and mercy so unbounded, let "our hearts be perfect with the Lord our God, to walk in His statutes, and to keep His commandments, as at this day."

CHAPTER XI.

SOLOMON'S SECOND OFFERINGS, AND THE LORD'S SECOND
APPEARANCE TO HIM.1 *Kings* viii. 62-66.

WHEN Solomon had ended his prayer and addressed the people, "the king, and all Israel with him, offered sacrifice before the Lord. And Solomon offered a sacrifice of peace-offerings, which he offered unto the Lord, two-and-twenty thousand oxen, and an hundred and twenty thousand sheep. So the king and all the children of Israel dedicated the house of the Lord." After, in the same way, hallowing the middle of the court, "Solomon held a feast, and all Israel with him, a great congregation, from the entering in of Hamath unto the river of Egypt, before the Lord our God, seven days and seven days, even fourteen days." Sacrifice was the sealing and sanctifying worship of the Israelitish Church. Through the sacrifices which Solomon offered in conjunction with the people he completed the dedication of the temple. Sacrifice was to the Israelite what worship is to the Christian. It was confession and supplication, thanksgiving, and especially the dedication of himself to the service of the Most High. Solomon and all the congregation of Israel, when the ark of the covenant was being removed from the city of David to be placed in the temple, went before it sacrificing sheep and oxen that could not be told nor numbered for multitude. There the internal worship of the heart and mind, or the worship of the inward man, was represented. And the things that enter into this worship cannot be told or numbered for multitude. So the Psalmist says, "How precious are Thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them! If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand" (cxxxix. 17, 18). "Many, O Lord, are Thy wonderful works which Thou hast done, and Thy thoughts which are to usward: they cannot be reckoned up in order unto Thee. If I would declare and speak of them, they are more than can be numbered" (xl. 5). Internal worship is a deep sense of the wonderful works which have been done to us and in us, and the precious thoughts that have been to usward, in the work of our regeneration; for that work and these thoughts transcend our apprehension and our power of estimation. This is the internal worship so well described by Addison when he says—

"When all Thy mercies, O my God,
My rising soul surveys,
Transported with the view, I'm lost
In wonder, love, and praise."

The bringing up of the ark of the covenant, to be deposited in the holy of holies, which is the raising of the holy law of God into the holiest place in the mind, is itself an act of the holiest and most interior worship, and one in which the worshipper has an inexpressible sense of the love and mercy of Him who has not only given us His law for our guidance, but who has given Himself for our salvation, and who has promised to meet us and commune with us over the mercy-seat of His propitiating love, and between the cherubim of love to Him and charity to our neighbour. For "the priests brought in the ark of the covenant of the Lord unto his place, into the oracle of the house, to the most holy place, even under the wings of the cherubims." And such was the holiness of the law, that "when the priests were come out of the holy place, the cloud filled the house of the Lord, so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud : for the glory of the Lord had filled the house of the Lord." It was then that Solomon spake, and after he had explained to the people the reason that he, rather than his father David, had been appointed to build the house, offered up the dedicatory prayer, the spiritual import of which we have considered.

The sacrifice which the king, and all Israel with him, offered unto the Lord after his wonderfully comprehensive and beautiful prayer was ended, represented that worship which is of the external man, the things of which can be numbered. For numbering, as we have seen, does not, in the spiritual sense, express quantity but quality. Things and states that in their nature transcend the ideas of thought, that are matters of feeling rather than of thinking, are said to be unnumbered ; while those which become subjects of thought and thence of utterance, are capable of being numbered, since their quality can be known and estimated. And this external worship is the complement and fulfilment of internal worship. Worship, like life, desires to come into fulness in outward and expressive acts. Therefore we often read in the Word of seeming repetitions, because that which is done in outward act is often a seeming repetition of what has been previously done as an act of the mind. The mind is indeed in every outward act, otherwise the act would be automatic ; but the mind sometimes acts without the simultaneous action of the body, although the body does not so act without the mind. But worship, although it may be a separate mental act, must in due time and at suitable seasons become an act of the mind and body combined. This makes the act of worship complete. And when worship exists in its fulness it exists in its holiness and in its power.

Besides the general sacrifices which Solomon offered, or included in them, he offered a sacrifice of peace-offerings. Now the peace-offering was among the freewill-offerings. And the freewill-offerings repre-

sented worship from freedom, and what is from freedom is from love; and love is the perfection of worship, as it is the fulfilling of the law. Peace, too, is the highest end of worship. The end of worship is to be at peace with God. And worship has this peace-making effect when it brings the mind of the worshipper into conformity with the mind of the Being worshipped. And this it does when all the affections and thoughts are brought into conformity with the will and wisdom of God, and are devoted to the service of Him who bestowed them. This is true worship. The affections and thoughts which are to be devoted to the Lord in worship, and which constitutes worship, were represented in the Israelitish Church by the offerings made to the Lord, especially by the clean and unblemished animals offered in sacrifice upon the altar. Solomon's peace-offerings consisted of oxen and sheep; and animals from the herd represented celestial-natural affections, and animals from the flock represented celestial-rational affections. The number of animals offered on the occasion of dedicating the temple must have been immense, and the profusion was no doubt intended to express, in their own way, the fervour of the devotion by which the king and the people were inspired on so grand a ceremonial. And grand it was beyond all their conceptions. No less than the representative occasion of the King of kings dedicating the glorious Temple of His perfected Humanity to the indwelling Divinity, when all the human affections and perceptions of the Glorified Man were hallowed, by being offered and united to the Divine Love and Wisdom, as existing from eternity in the Creator of heaven and earth. And as the effect and image of this, it was the representative occasion of dedicating to the Saviour the Church, as the mystical body and temple of His presence with His people, and, not the least significant and important to us, the dedication of regenerated humanity, in the persons of those who are built up into temples of the Holy Spirit, which is the Spirit of the Lord dwelling, with all the riches of redeeming love, in the hearts of the faithful. This state is peace in its realized spiritual sense. It is the inward peace which is secured by the Christian having, by the power of Jesus Christ, conquered all his inward enemies, and brought every thought and affection into a harmonious relation to each other, and to the Lord, who conquered all that raised itself above His Divine authority. And the multitude of oxen and sheep offered is expressive of the completeness of the worship which consists in hallowing all the affections to the Lord and to His service. For the twenty-two thousand is expressive of the conjunction of goodness and truth in the outward man, or the celestial-natural mind, and the hundred and twenty thousand sheep is expressive of the conjunction of goodness and truth in the inner man, or the celestial-rational mind.

A thousand often occurs in the Word as expressive of a large but

indefinite number. In the Divine sense it is expressive of what is infinite and eternal; and in the spiritual sense, of what has something of infinite and eternal in it, or of that in the human mind in which the Lord dwells with His love and wisdom, giving to the finite recipient the power of indefinite and endless progression in goodness and truth. The Lord dwells, and can only dwell, in that which is His own, not in anything that is ours. In every human mind the Lord provides that some heavenly seeds shall be sown by angelic and human hands during infancy and childhood; and these, like the first vegetation that clothes the flinty rock or barren ground, form the vegetable soil which becomes, in those who preserve and improve it, the good ground of an honest heart, in which the seeds sown by the Son of Man in later life take root, and bear fruit, and bring forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. These are the "remains" in which the heavenly life in every one has its beginning. And these are especially meant, when they are expressed numerically, by ten; and they may indeed be expressed by any multiple of ten; for this mode of increasing a number does not change its characteristic meaning but only exalts it. Twenty has thus the same meaning as ten; so has ten tens, and so has ten hundred. The same idea enters into them all; the difference is only in degree. This number enters into so many others, because that which it primarily signifies enters into all subsequent states of mind; for regeneration is according to the quantity and quality of remains. There are other numbers that express other ideas, because there are various states of human experience. For although the essential elements of spiritual life are the same in all, there are differences in each. There are states through which all pass, and states which only some experience; and all these are expressed, when the subject requires it, by different numbers. Six, for example, is expressive of a state of labour and temptation, and seven of a state of rest and peace: like the six days of work and the Sabbath of rest. Two is expressive of the heavenly marriage, or the conjunction of goodness and truth. And this is the reason that the two in the first of the present numbers directs us to this meaning.

But besides the offerings which Solomon made to the Lord in dedicating the temple and hallowing the middle of the court, the king "held a feast, and all Israel with him, a great congregation, from the entering in of Hamoth unto the river of Egypt, before the Lord our God." While sacrifice represented the conjunction of the numbers of the Church with the Lord, feasts represented their conjunction with each other. The means of conjunction are love to the Lord and love to each other. The sacrifices and feasts were therefore other forms of the two commandments on which hang all the law and the prophets. The vast congregation which participated in this uniting feast, was

from Hamoth unto the river of Egypt, to mark the extent of Solomon's dominion. Hamoth was on the northern and Egypt was on the southern extremity of the land which owned his sway, so that his dominion extended from Syria to Egypt. The extent of Solomon's dominion was, in fact, that which the Lord through Moses had promised should be the extent of Israel's possessions. "Your border shall be from Egypt unto the entrance of Hamoth" (Num. xxiv. 5-8). This promise was now fulfilled; and in its fulfilment was represented the extension of the Church from wisdom to science, for the Syrians were among those who were called sons of the east. The feast is said to have lasted seven days and seven days, even fourteen days. In the Book of Chronicles it is said "they kept the dedication of the altar seven days, and the feast seven days" (2 Chron. vii. 9). The eighth day on which the people were sent away was therefore the first after the seventh day of the feast. Seven is a holy number, and twice seven is expressive of what is most holy. The eighth day is the beginning of a new state, which includes in it the previous states of holiness, which have been acquired in the course of the regenerate life, states of love and states of charity. The people "blessed the king, and went unto their tents joyful and glad of heart for all the goodness that the Lord had done for David His servant, and for Israel His people."

In looking at this subject in its highest and therefore holiest sense, in which the temple represents the Lord's humanity, we see in its completion and dedication the glorification of the humanity, and its union with the Divinity. It is not perhaps necessary that there should be any outward resemblance between the historical circumstances connected with the building and dedication of the temple and those recorded in connection with the glorification of the Lord's humanity. Yet it is not unreasonable to expect that the historical as well as the prophetic Scriptures should show some traces of literal similitude, such as those between the prediction and the event in Zechariah and the Psalms. It was after the Lord's triumphal entry into Jerusalem, immediately before His crucifixion, and in reference to which He said, "The hour is come that the Son of Man should be glorified" (John xii. 26); and, when Judas had gone out to betray Him, "Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in Him" (xiii. 31): it was on this occasion that He went into the temple, and cast out the mercenary dealers, and said unto them, "It is written, My house shall be called of all nations the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves" (Mark xi. 17). It was then also that the Lord ate the passover with His disciples, and instituted the Holy Supper, as a feast commemorative of His great works of Glorification and Redemption. And the dedicatory prayer of Solomon may find a parallel, both in character and meaning, in that Divine prayer in which Jesus, when

He had lifted up His eyes to heaven, said, "Father, glorify Thy Son, that Thy Son also may glorify Thee;" in which He prayed for His disciples, that they might be kept from evil and sanctified through the truth, and might be one even as He and the Father were one; and in which, as Solomon prayed, not only for his own people, Israel, but for the stranger, who cometh out of a far country for the Lord's name sake; so the Lord prayed, not only for His disciples, but for them which should believe on Him through their word.

When we regard Solomon as a type of Jesus, and the temple as a symbol of His humanity, we can, at least, see that the grand ceremonial of its dedication is no less than a foreshadowing of the consecration of the Lord's humanity to the service of the Divinity, as the Temple in which the Creator dwells, in which He is present with angels in heaven and with men on earth, towards which all eyes are to be turned and all prayers directed, and from which all help and blessing come. When spiritual Israel look up to Jesus as their King, as much greater than Solomon as the eternal is greater than the temporal, and unite with Him in celebrating the great event of the Incarnation, which has brought their God near to them, for their help and comfort, they have reason to bless their King, and to go unto their tents joyful and glad of heart, for all the good that the Lord hath done for David His servant, and for Israel His people. The faithful, when they have entered in spirit into the contemplation of that marvellous work of Divine wisdom and benevolence, which has provided for them and for all men the inestimable blessing of Salvation, cannot but be joyful and glad of heart, and carry that state of mind down into their homes and into all their conduct and life in the world.

An encouraging and warning voice came to Solomon, after he had finished the temple, and through him to the people, after they had departed to their homes. "The Lord appeared to Solomon the second time, as He had appeared unto him at Gibeon. The Lord said unto him, I have heard thy prayer and thy supplication, that thou hast made before Me: I have hallowed this house, which thou hast built, to put My name there for ever; and Mine eyes and Mine heart shall be there perpetually." This second appearance of the Lord to Solonion, like Solomon's second sacrifice, is the completion and confirmation of the first, as that which is begun in the inner, is perfected in the outer man. Regarded in its highest sense, how well does the Divine language apply to the Divine Humanity. "I have hallowed this house, which thou hast built, to put My name there for ever; and Mine eyes and Mine heart shall be there continually." The Temple of the Humanity is the Lord's eternal dwelling-place, and His Wisdom and His Love shall be there perpetually. The Lord promises to Solomon that if he will walk before Him, as David his father did, in

integrity of heart and uprightness, and do all that He had commanded him, He would establish the throne of his kingdom upon Israel for ever; but that if he should at all turn from following the Lord, He would cut off Israel out of the land, and the house itself He should cast out of His sight, and Israel should become a proverb and a byword among all people. How can this apply to Him whom Solomon and the temple represented? It can apply to Him relatively, not absolutely; as the Lord is represented as a lamb slain, when the Divinity of His Humanity is denied (Rev. v. 6). But the encouragement and the warning are to the Church and its members. That which has been built up by faith and labour can only be preserved by integrity of heart and uprightness of life. This is the lesson which the Lord, on His second appearing to Solomon, teaches us. And it is one that we should lay to heart, for in no state that we attain on earth can we forego the exercise of watchfulness and prayer.

CHAPTER XII.

CABUL.

1 Kings ix. 10-14.

HIRAM, king of Tyre, who had supplied much of the material and many of the skilled workmen for building the house of the Lord and the king's house, had received, during the progress of the work, a yearly subsidy of twenty thousand measures of wheat for food for his household, and twenty measures of pure oil (v. 11). Thus the natural man supplies the spiritual with the materials, and the knowledge required for preparing the materials, for building in the mind a habitation for the Lord to dwell in, while the spiritual man supplies the natural with the principles of truth and goodness as the means of supporting the life of faith and love. But "it came to pass at the end of twenty years, when Solomon had built the two houses, the house of the Lord, and the king's house, (now Hiram the king of Tyre had furnished Solomon with cedar-trees and fir-trees, and with gold, according to all his desire,) that then king Solomon gave Hiram twenty cities in the land of Galilee." So that the spiritual man not only supplies the natural with the internal and essential principles of truth and goodness, but gives him the external and doctrinal principles corresponding to them, and in these doctrinals the external affections of goodness and truth which constitute their life: for the cities which Solomon gave to Hiram were not only Israelitish cities, but cities inhabited by Israelites, cities filled with life and industry. These cities

were in Galilee; but Galilee had not yet acquired the Gentile character and external signification that it had after the deportation of the ten tribes, and the filling of their depopulated cities with the subjects of their heathen conqueror. Galilee belonged at this time to the tribe of Naphtali, that tribe to which the mother of Hiram, the Tyrian artificer, belonged. Naphtali was described by Jacob as a hind let loose, giving goodly words (Gen. xlv. 21); and signified the freedom of natural affection, especially after temptation. Galilee partook of this natural signification; so that cities in that part of Canaan formed a suitable present to the king of Tyre, whose representative character accorded with the place where the bestowed possession lay. Galilee also was contiguous to Tyre, which was on the sea-coast to the west of Galilee; so that from its natural situation, it was a suitable gift, so far as Solomon was concerned, and from its spiritual meaning suitable, so far as regards the spiritual man.

But the result was not what Solomon no doubt desired and expected. "Hiram came out from Tyre to see the cities which Solomon had given him; and they pleased him not. And he said, What cities are these which thou hast given me, my brother? And he called them the land of Cabul unto this day." Attempts have been made to discover the ground of Hiram's disappointment and chagrin. Some have supposed that as the Tyrians were a maritime people, a commercial nation, whose merchants were princes, Hiram was displeased at being presented with inland towns, instead of places that would have afforded him room for extending his border along the sea-shore. But the narrative itself suggests another and the only plausible reason. Hiram seems to have made no objection to the situation of the cities, and only found fault with the cities themselves after he had seen them. It is not at all surprising that the cities of Canaan, even in the time of Solomon, may have appeared mean and squalid in the eyes of the king of Tyre. Tyre was then perhaps the richest, the most prosperous, and the most luxurious city in the world; and although David and Solomon had amassed great wealth for the building of the temple, and the Israelites had made considerable progress in the arts, yet in wealth and refinement the subjects of Solomon must have been far behind those of Hiram. This condition of Tyre answered to her representative character. And indeed the representative character of the ancient peoples and nations that have a place in the Bible history, is not arbitrary, but arises out of the particular genius which they inherit and develop. For the different nations of the earth are, in relation to each other, as the different individuals or classes in one nation are to one another; and both of these differences owe their origin and existence, and correspond, to the different faculties of the human mind, all national differences of character and pursuit being the result of one

particular faculty having, from natural tendency or accidental or local circumstances, taken a particular direction. So much is this the case that there are, we are told, nations in these modern times of ours answering to all the nations of antiquity, having similar characteristic differences and similar correspondences. And these differences and correspondences must become more distinctly marked the more the national characters are developed. These differences are providential, and are important means of general advancement as well as of present benefit. It is, on the largest scale, a division of labour, mental and physical, by which greater perfection is attained, both in the quality and measure of production, than would be possible if all nations took one direction and pursued one object. It is a reason for amity between peoples and nations, and for friendly intercourse, and the free exchange of their mental and physical wealth. Such will be the happy result of these differences of natural character and pursuit when men and nations become wiser and better ; when they recognise and work in harmony with the Creator, who has made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell upon the face of the earth ; when Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim ; when, in brief, men shall see that, both in their individual and national dealings with each other, what is right in principle is best in practice.

Yet there is this to be expected, that those who are lower in the scale of intellectual development will be less willing to yield compliance with the awards of high principle ; just as in our own nature there are some elements that are less disposed than others to comply with the requirements of law and order, that are ordained for their own good, as well as for that of the whole man, body and soul. Our natural appetites and passions are sometimes unwilling to submit to the dictates of reason and prudence. Some of the most necessary of our mental acquisitions have a tendency to deteriorate the mind which they are intended to improve. Solomon represents wisdom as exhorting men to receive knowledge rather than choice gold (Prov. viii. 10) ; and yet the Apostle tells us that knowledge puffeth up (1 Cor. viii. 1) ; this however is knowledge without charity, which, he tells us, edifieth. Now Tyre represented knowledge, even that kind of knowledge of which the Apostle speaks ; and the Tyrians represented those who cultivate knowledge, but are liable to neglect charity, and who therefore are in danger of being puffed up, being deficient in the grace that edifieth. In the prophets Tyre is described generally as being of this character, and her ruin is predicted as a consequence. "Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God ; every precious stone was thy covering. By thy great wisdom and by thy traffic hast thou increased thy riches, and thine heart is lifted up because of thy riches. Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty" (Ezek. xxviii.). "It shall come to

pass after the end of seventy years, that the Lord will visit Tyre, and she shall turn to her hire, and shall commit fornication with all the kingdoms of the world upon the face of the earth. And her merchandise and her hire shall be holiness to the Lord: it shall not be treasured nor laid up; for her merchandise shall be for them that dwell before the Lord, to eat sufficiently, and for durable clothing" (Isa. xxiii. 17, 18). Here we have a very striking representative description of the result of unsanctified knowledge in puffing up the mind, and that of the true value and use of knowledge, in its being sanctified, and becoming holiness to the Lord, when bestowed upon those who will apply it to its right use, by employing it to procure the essential means of life.

Now the very tendency to this pride of knowledge, and the consequent tendency to place it above the charity which edifieth, may enable us to see why Hiram, king of Tyre, when he came to see the cities in the land of Canaan which Solomon had given him, should have seen no beauty in them, but have given them a name which meant that he had no pleasure in them. This does not, however, imply that he regarded them with disgust or contempt. It is evident from his addressing Solomon as his brother, and from giving the king of Israel sixty talents of gold, that he appreciated the gift, although he saw no beauty in it. The character of the Tyrians was like that of the spirits of mercury, who occupy a province in the Grand Man, and are therefore in a heavenly state, and yet are chiefly concerned with the knowledge of things. They correspond to the memory, but to the memory of things abstracted from what is terrestrial and purely material. When it was suggested to them whether they proposed any use from their knowledge, since it is not enough to be delighted with knowledge, because knowledge has respect to use as an end, they replied that they were delighted with knowledge, and that to them knowledge was use. The genius of these spirits our author exemplifies by his own experience. Spirits, when they come to any one, put on all things contained in his memory. "Some spirits came to me. Whilst searching into various things (in my memory), and among them the cities and countries where I had been, I observed that they had no wish to know the temples, palaces, houses, and streets, but only the things that had been transacted in them, with what was transacted there, and to the genius and manners of the inhabitants, and other similar things. I was surprised to find them of such a character, and inquired why they disregarded the magnificence of the places, and attended only to the parts and transactions connected with them. They replied that they had no delight in regarding natural, corporeal, and terrestrial objects, but only things that are real."

The cities of Canaan represented the doctrines of the Church and of religion. This is the spiritual meaning of cities in the most

comprehensive sense ; but in the particular sense they signify the interiors of the mind where doctrinals are, or rather where truths are conjoined to goodness ; for the principles of truth and goodness which belong to any one form as it were a city, and hence one in whom the Church is, is called the city of God. The signification of a city is like that of a house. In the universal sense a house signifies goodness, but in the particular sense it signifies a man, especially his mind, where goodness and truth are conjoined ; and a house with its apartments, circumjacent buildings, and courts is a city in the least form.

Those who are in the knowledge more than in the life of religion can take pleasure in what we may call the outworks of religion, in building churches and attending to all that relates to their support and adornment ; in contributing to the agencies that are employed for increasing and diffusing a knowledge of the truth ; and in supplying the skill as well as the means for organization and development. They do not originate any great or useful work of an internal and elevating kind. They do not produce and nourish living principles, but only help to construct the outward forms in which inward principles may find a dwelling-place. Their character and function in this respect are well described by the prophet Isaiah, in the burden of Tyre : "Be thou ashamed, O Zidon : for the sea hath spoken, even the strength of the sea, saying, I travail not, nor bring forth children, neither do I nourish up young men, nor bring up virgins" (xxiii. 4). Tyre and Zidon are those who are in the knowledge of truth and goodness, but who do not give birth to these living principles themselves, and do not therefore nourish the affections of truth nor bring up the affections of goodness, but are content to remain in the knowledge of divine and spiritual things. As merchants and traffickers in spiritual things, they are useful to others ; and therefore it is said, "Be still, ye inhabitants of the isle ; thou whom the merchants of Zidon, that pass over the sea, have replenished" (ver. 2).

There are those who find their vocation and the delight of their lives in verbal criticism, and in the study of subjects that tend to establish the truth and elucidate the meaning of the letter of the Scriptures. And all such students perform an important use. They are doing for the theologian and the preacher, and for the whole Church, what Hiram did for Solomon, and through him for Israel. For the letter of the Word is the temple in which its spiritual and celestial senses are contained, and in which the Divine presence is with men ; and whatever helps us to a more exact knowledge and intelligent understanding of the literal sense of the Word, helps us to a more accurate view of its internal meaning. Such students of the letter, though affirmative and devout, may not feel an interest or take delight in the interior subjects which the Bible, as a Divine revelation, was designed to teach. They do not reject them as things of no value and unworthy.

of their acceptance, but they have no pleasure in them as subjects of study. To them they are Cabul, and the sphere of investigation to which they belong is the land of Cabul; and if they continue in this state of mind, the higher objects and studies of religion are what the cities of Canaan, given by Solomon, were to Hiram, who "called them the land of Cabul unto this day."

Those who belong to that class of minds represented by the king and the men of Tyre, and whose genius makes them willing and skilful workers in the sacred cause of revealed religion, but in that department which relates to its external evidences, need to be careful that they do not so neglect or condemn its inward spirit as to bring themselves under the condemnation pronounced against Tyre as the enemy of Israel. Science and knowledge supply and prepare the material for laying the foundation and building the house, but the end or purpose of the house is that the Lord may there inscribe His name, and that He may be worshipped therein.

CHAPTER XIII.

SOLOMON'S CITIES: TADMOR IN THE WILDERNESS.

1 *Kings* ix. 16.

IN chapter v. we read that Solomon made a levy out of all Israel, and the levy was thirty thousand men. And Solomon had seventy thousand that bare burdens, and eighty thousand hewers in the mountains: besides the chief officers who were over the work, three thousand and three hundred, who ruled over the people that wrought in the work. It appears however from chapter ix. that those who performed the servile labour were the children of the nations of Canaan whom the Israelites had been unable to subdue. On these Solomon levied a tribute of bond-service; but of the children of Israel Solomon made no bondmen, but they were men of war, and his servants, and his princes, and his captains, and rulers of his chariots, and his horsemen. These were the chief officers that were over Solomon's work, five hundred and fifty. This was the usual fate, in olden times, of conquered nations. In the case of the Israelites it represented the natural in subjection to the spiritual, and the service which the lower was made to render to the higher. The Israelites themselves had been bondmen, and had been made to render bond-service, to the Egyptians, and all their service was with rigour; but this represented that inversion of order, the spiritual in bondage, and compelled to render bond-service, to the natural. Besides the house of the Lord, and his own

house, Solomon built Millo, and the wall of Jerusalem, as well as a number of cities. Millo, as the name expresses, was a rampart or mound, which had been built by David (2 Sam. v. 9), but was so extended by Solomon, as to entitle him to be considered the builder of the new structure. This and the wall of Jerusalem were for the protection of the city, which now contained the glory of Israel, the house dedicated to the Lord as the true God, to which the nations might look and from which they might learn. The wall, great and high, which encloses and defends the holy city New Jerusalem, shows that the wall of the earthly city had a representative meaning. Walls and ramparts signify the doctrines of the literal sense of the Word; for the literal sense of the Word defends its spiritual sense, as walls defend a city. But as doctrines introduce those who are friendly, as well as exclude those who are hostile, to the Church, the walls of the holy city had gates on all sides.

Solomon built several cities in Canaan itself, which represented internal doctrines of the Church. Hazor was in Naphtali, Megiddo was in Manasseh, Gezer was in Ephraim, Bethhoron the nether was in Benjamin, and Baalath was in Dan. It would be interesting to consider these cities singly as well as collectively, but as this would occupy too much space, it must suffice to notice one or two. Hazor, the first mentioned, and whose name indicates a place of great strength, had formerly been the head of all the Canaanitish kingdoms. This is evident from the account given by Joshua of the conduct of Jabin king of Hazor, when he heard of the defeat of the five kings on the memorable day when the sun stood still. He sent to the kings of the Canaanites east and west, south and north, and they went out, they and their hosts with them, much people, even as the sand that is upon the sea-shore for multitude, with horses and chariots very many. Encouraged by the Lord, Joshua led Israel against this mighty host, and they smote them until they left them none remaining. "And Joshua at that time turned back, and took Hazor, and smote the king thereof: for Hazor before time was at the head of all these kingdoms" (xi. 1-10). This head of all the Canaanitish kingdoms, which had been destroyed by Joshua, was built by Solomon. "There is a time to break down, and a time to build up" (Eccles. iii. 3). Solomon's reign was the time for building up. The reign of goodness is the time for building up habitations of peace where habitations of violence had been, and which the power of truth had destroyed. In the place where the head of all these evil kingdoms had been, Solomon planted a new city in the possessions of that tribe to which Hazor had been assigned, those of the tribe of Naphtali, because that tribe represented those who, by temptation-conflicts, come into a state of liberty, and into the marriage of goodness and truth.

In the "Adversaria" the city of Hazor, in Joshua xi., is explained to mean the Roman religion, which is expressed by various names. As the leading characteristic of that religion is the love of dominion, which is the desire to rule over all, this is well represented by Hazor being the head of all the kingdoms of Canaan, and by their kings obeying the call of Jabin to come up and fight against Israel. But as the love of dominion is not confined to any one form of religion, nor to any one class of men, we are to look for it and fight against it in ourselves. And when we have overcome that great evil, we are to build up that which is its opposite in character and use. The cities which Solomon built or rebuilt in Canaan occupied the same sites and bore the same names as those they superseded. An evil is but a good perverted. The evils of the Canaanites were the perverted goodnesses of the Ancient Church; and the places in Canaan had their representative character from that earlier dispensation. The Israelites did not originate, they only restored, the symbolisms of the Ancient Church, even in rebuilding the cities which they themselves had thrown down. This city is the first mentioned of those which Solomon built, because the principle it represented is the first in importance of all which these restored cities of Canaan represented.

Gezer is mentioned with this peculiarity, that "Pharaoh king of Egypt had gone up, and taken it, and burnt it with fire, and slain the Canaanites that dwelt in the city, and given it for a present unto his daughter, Solomon's wife." Why Pharaoh had gone up against Gezer, which was in Solomon's dominions, it is difficult to conjecture, and impossible, in the absence of any explanation, to understand. We find that when Horam king of Gezer came up to help Lachish, Joshua smote him and his people, until he had left none remaining (Josh. x. 33). The children of Ephraim, who obtained this city as part of their inheritance, "drove not out the Canaanites that dwelt in Gezer: but the Canaanites dwell among the Ephraimites unto this day, and serve under tribute" (xvi. 10). This condition of things was not peculiar to the sons of Ephraim and the inhabitants of Gezer, for several of the tribes failed to drive out the original inhabitants of the cities they took, and continued to live together with their vanquished enemies. But Pharaoh, in this instance, accomplished what the sons of Ephraim had been unable to effect. It would seem, indeed, that not only had the children of Ephraim failed to drive out the Canaanites, but that the Canaanites had driven out the children of Ephraim; otherwise Pharaoh would not have burnt the city—unless we are to suppose that at the time he went up against Gezer he was not on friendly relations with Israel. But whatever may have been the circumstances, the facts recorded are all we have to guide us to their spiritual meaning.

Gezer, as part of the possession of Ephraim, partook of the repre-

sentative character of the tribe. Ephraim represented the intellectual principle of the Church, or the new understanding, as Manasseh, his elder brother, represented the new will, born and existing in the natural mind. But there is something connected with Ephraim and Manasseh which does not apply to the fathers of the other tribes. They were the sons of an Israelitish father but of an Egyptian mother, for Joseph was married to Asenath, daughter of Poti-pheri, the priest of On, and being born and educated in Egypt, they had something of the Egyptian character as well as nature in them. Asenath was not, like Hagar, a handmaid and concubine, but the daughter of a priest and a wife. She represented, not the affection of science, but the affection of good, but of good having a scientific origin, and therefore having a scientific character. Here we find Gezer, a city of Ephraim, a tribe descended from the son of an Egyptian mother, taken by an Egyptian king, and restored to Solomon, as king of Israel, through an Egyptian wife; for Gezer was part of the dower which Pharaoh's daughter brought to Solomon. Gezer must therefore represent the doctrine of the Church, as built up in the intellect grounded in the affection and perception of science, the science not of material but of spiritual things. For it is to be remembered that Gezer, as it came to Solomon, was but the ruins of the Canaanitish town. Pharaoh took it, and burnt it with fire, and slew the Canaanites; it was Solomon who built or restored it.

There is one other city that Solomon built that demands special notice. Tadmor in the wilderness has acquired celebrity from its having risen, after Solomon's time, from a simple town, for the rest and refreshment of merchants in passing through the Syrian desert, into a city of extraordinary magnificence. To the general reader of history it is better known as Palmyra. Both names have the same meaning, and designate it as the city of palms. The description of this city as given by Jones, in his work on the proper names of the Bible, is the most concise we can present:—

“Solomon built this city on a fertile spot, on what is usually called an oasis in the desert; for here were fountains of water to refresh the thirsty traveller, and shady trees to screen him from the sun. It is remarkable that he should have chosen such a spot to found a city, surrounded as it was with an extensive and inhospitable waste—a wilderness of barrenness and desolation; but when we consider that it was a place abounding with palms and fountains of water, and that all caravans with the produce of Eastern Asia from the Persian Gulf and the banks of the Euphrates to Phœnicia, Syria, and the various mercantile cities of the Mediterranean, must necessarily pass that way, we see at once the good policy of the Jewish monarch in founding a city there. His wisdom in the selection is proved from the fact that it

became the greatest mercantile city of the ancient Eastern world, and was the emporium of all the luxuries of India. Nothing is recorded in Scripture about it except that Solomon built it. It was first destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar, according to an ancient historian; and afterwards it submitted to the Persians, the Greeks, and the Romans; but it was only under the last of these that it attained the summit of its glory. In the time of Aurelian, the governor, Odentos, styled himself emperor of Palmyra and the east, and he bid fair to maintain the dignity he had assumed; but sudden death arrested him in his career. His queen, however, followed in his steps; but the emperor Aurelian marched a large army against her, and, after one battle, compelled her to retire within the walls of Palmyra. He laid siege to it, and, after an obstinate resistance, subdued it, consigning the city to the rapacity of his soldiers; it was afterwards however repaired.

"The queen of the Eastern world is now a ruin, and the abode of a small tribe of Arabs, whose wretched hovels are established in the peristyle court of the great temple. The ruins of this city are the most magnificent in the world, if one may so term such an evident token of human frailty. Here are thousands of Corinthian columns, some of which are forty feet high, erecting their heads towards the sky. Before Bruce penetrated into Abyssinia, he visited this place; and he says that when he arrived on the top of one of the hills on the west or north-west, he beheld the most stupendous and astonishing sight. The extensive plain below was covered so thick with magnificent buildings, that one seemed to touch the other; all of fine proportion, all of agreeable form, and all of white stone; and in the distance the magnificent Temple of the Sun reared its lofty head, to the honour of which the Palmyrenians dedicated their city. For ten miles in circumference there are remains of this ancient city, though the principal ruins may be contracted to three. In this space travellers find the courts and halls of once proud palaces; here a temple with its peristyle half thrown down; and there a noble piazza, half a mile in length and forty feet in breadth, with two rows of marble columns; now we see a triumphal arch, or a violated tomb. Wherever the traveller turns his head, the earth is strewn with chiselled stones half buried, with broken entablatures, with damaged capitals, mutilated friezes, disfigured relics, effaced sculptures, and ruined altars." It may be remarked that more recent travellers have made, by closer observation, some deduction from the grandeur of this description, especially as to the purity of the style of architecture and the finish of the work; but after all allowance is made for the glow of first and general impressions, there can be no doubt that the ruins of Palmyra are something marvellous.

But our chief concern is with the beginning of this magnificent place as Tadmor in the wilderness.

If we view this city, erected by Solomon in the desert, as a resting-place for pilgrims, in connection with the cityless desert through which Israel passed in their way to Canaan, we can hardly fail to see in it the sign and emblem of a change of state, such as that not unfrequently predicted in the prophets, when "the wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose. And an highway shall be there, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein. No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon, it shall not be found there; but the redeemed [of the Lord] shall walk there: and the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away" (Isa. xxxv.). All this cannot be drawn from the circumstance of Solomon building a city in the desert, but it points in this direction. The Psalmist, speaking of the redeemed of the Lord, whom He redeemed from the hand of the enemy, describes their destitute and tried condition by saying, "They wandered in the wilderness in a solitary way; they found no city to dwell in." Yet the Lord "led them forth by the right way, that they might go to a city of habitation" (Ps. cvii.). Now the circumstances were changed. The traveller and the pilgrim were now provided with a city in the desert, where they might avoid the ills which the Psalmist laments his forefathers had suffered, when "hungry and thirsty, their soul fainted in them" (ib.). And so with the Christian. He too has to wander in the wilderness. But when he is in some degree perfected by suffering, and has prospered, and the kingdom is established in him, he can and will build a Tadmor in the desert, that it may serve to refresh those who bring their treasures to enrich and delight his soul. May we not say with the sweet singer of Israel in the same inspired composition, "O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good: for His mercy endureth for ever"?

CHAPTER XIV.

SOLOMON'S FAME: THE QUEEN OF SHEBA'S VISIT.

1 Kings x. 1-10.

THE wealth, the glory, and the wisdom of Solomon became so famous as to gain him the admiration and the homage of all other kings. "He exceeded all the kings of the earth for riches and for wisdom. And all the earth sought to Solomon, to hear his wisdom, which God had put in

his heart. And they brought every man his present, vessels of silver, and vessels of gold, and garments, and armour, and spices, horses, and mules, a rate year by year." In this exaltation in riches and wisdom over the kings of the earth was represented that of the Lord Himself as King of kings. This supreme royalty of the Saviour does not merely mean that He is the supreme ruler on earth as He is in heaven, that all kings rule in His might as by His authority ; but understood in relation to the Church and heaven, it describes the fact that all Divine Truths, which kings signify, have relation to Him who is the Truth itself, and that their power to rule and the efficacy of their governments are derived from the Lord alone. The Lord to us is King of kings, when all the truths we know and acknowledge are subordinate to the one Divine truth that the Lord is all to us, that He is the author of our mercies and the Saviour of our souls—that Jesus in His Divine Humanity is the only object of our love and faith. This precious truth is that which sanctifies all others ; and the practical exaltation of Him who is the way, the truth, and the life is that which brings wealth and peace to the soul. Solomon, as richer and wiser than all kings, is the true order of Divine truths in the inner man ; and when this order is established, then the faculties and principles of the outer man render a universal submission, and bring their various offerings of gratitude or duty, to the ruling power. All the earth seek to Solomon to hear his wisdom, which in its origin is Divine, when the whole natural mind turns to the spiritual for instruction and guidance in the ways of wisdom and of life, and bring the various perceptions and knowledges of goodness and truth, to enrich the inward man with the wealth of knowledge and science. We bring our gifts, vessels of silver and of gold, and raiment, and spices, horses, and mules, year by year, when we apply the scientifics of good and truth, and the intellectual and rational perceptions of truth and goodness, to the inward principles of religion in order to confirm and illustrate them, and thus to enrich and exalt them. Such things are involved in the kings of the earth being excelled by Solomon, and by all the earth coming to hear his wisdom, and presenting him with gifts.

But while we thus read of the kings of the earth being inferior to Solomon in riches and wisdom, we find that one of the queens of the earth made a pilgrimage to the city of the renowned sovereign, to hear his wisdom and to test it with hard questions. "The queen of Sheba, when she heard the fame of Solomon concerning the name of the Lord, came to prove him with hard questions. And she came to Jerusalem with a very great train, with camels that bare spices, and very much gold, and precious stones."

The visit of the queen of Sheba to Solomon is essentially Oriental in its character. It has something of the air of an Eastern romance. But it is true history, and shows that truth is more beautiful and

instructive, if not always stranger, than fiction. It is not of human but of Divine creation. It is not shaped by the human imagination, with a view to produce a certain effect and teach a particular moral lesson. It is the outgrowth of human nature, and is shaped by that providential operation which enters into all the affairs of human life. It comes home therefore to the hearts and understandings of men, and does not, like fiction, merely or chiefly play about the imagination and appeal to the moral sentiments. The difference between them is like that brought out in one of the traditional stories that have come down to us respecting the queen of Sheba, in testing Solomon's wisdom. The queen appeared once in the presence of Solomon with two flowers in her hands, one natural and the other artificial, and demanded of the king which was the true and which the false. The artificial flower was so much like nature that the king was unable to decide ; but raising his eyes he saw some bees outside the lattice ; he ordered the window to be opened, when the insects at once made their way to the true flower, where the honey-cells were contained. As, in the case of the two women, he discovered the true from the false mother by appealing to the affection of the human heart, he now saw which was the true flower and which was the false by appealing to animal instinct, which, in its own sphere, is more unerring than human wisdom, but in the ready employment of which human wisdom shows its superiority and power.

One of the uses of the historic form in which God has been pleased to present a considerable portion of His Word is, that it may interest the minds of pious readers, especially of the young and simple. And as the Word is the medium of connection between heaven and earth, and of communion between angels and men, the narratives of the Bible not only, like other histories, afford immediate pleasure and instruction, but they are the means by which attendant angels convey some of their own celestial affections and delights to the mind, where they lie like hidden manna, that is gradually gathered up to feed the tender germs of heavenly feeling and thought that the Spirit of the Lord generates in every human soul.

To the young mind, with warm impulses, an ardent desire for knowledge, and a keen relish for the beautiful and the true, what can be more interesting than the conduct, what more inspiring than the example, of this Eastern queen undertaking a long and toilsome journey to do homage to the king whose fame for riches and wisdom had spread through all lands, and whose wisdom she had come to try with hard questions, not as a mere intellectual exercise, but as a means of drawing forth the treasures of human and Divine knowledge with which this favourite of heaven had been so richly endowed ?

We need not stop to examine the question as to the particular:

country from which Solomon's royal visitor came. Sheba is mentioned several times in Scripture, but without anything being said from which we can determine with certainty whether it was in Arabia or in Ethiopia. Our main object is to draw from it some religious instruction, and this we must expect to find in its spiritual meaning. And perhaps the safest ground on which we can base our idea of place in regard to the queen's dominions is that contained in the statement of our Lord, who calls her the queen of the south—south in relation to Palestine, south in the spiritual sense.

To the young mind, with generous sympathies, an ardent desire for knowledge, and a keen sentimental relish for the beautiful and the true, what can be more interesting than the conduct, what more inspiring than the example, of the Arabian queen undertaking a long and toilsome journey, to do homage to the king whose fame for riches and wisdom had spread through all lands, and whose wisdom she had come to try with hard questions, not as a mere intellectual exercise, but as a means of drawing forth the treasures of human and Divine knowledge with which this favourite of heaven had been so highly endowed?

Under this pleasing narrative lie profound spiritual truths relating to the Lord and the Church. In its highest typical sense it relates to the Lord Himself. The queen of Sheba coming to Solomon, to Jerusalem, with a very great train, with camels carrying spices, and very much gold and precious stones, represented the wisdom and intelligence that were added to the Lord in His humanity, whom Solomon typified. In a lower sense the incident, as we learn from the Lord's teaching, had reference to the Gentile Church. For in the Gospel, our Lord, favourably contrasting the conduct of the Gentiles of former times with that of the Jews in those days, addresses His unbelieving and profane hearers in these words: "The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here. The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here." The Gentile queen, no doubt, therefore represented the Gentile Church, which turned with affection and a teachable spirit to the Lord the Saviour, who was indeed greater than Solomon. For if Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of the lilies of the field, how much less was he to be compared to Him who created the lily, and who taught it to grow, without toiling or spinning, into a thing of simple but exquisite beauty and grace, and whose internal structure, composed of fibres woven by the hand of infinite Wisdom, is still more admirable than its outward appearance?

And what is true of the lily was still more true of Him who made it, since, under the simple garb of frail humanity, though adorned with virtue and beneficence such as never man exhibited, and speaking words such as never man spake, concealed under His human form glory, and wisdom, and riches, in themselves infinite and incomprehensible.

In its particular sense and individual application, the queen of Sheba represents that love of true wisdom which, as it is inspired by, turns to, Him who is Wisdom itself—the wisdom that is displayed and reflected in the works of creation, which is manifested in the works of Providence, Redemption, and Salvation, and which is revealed in its fulness in the Sacred Scriptures. This love of wisdom is inspired indeed into all minds. It is that which prompts the human mind everywhere to seek after knowledge—for even the love of the knowledge of nature is from the Source of all love and the Author of all knowledge. The knowledge of nature is introductory and subservient to that which we derive from the Word of God. There is an exact correspondence between them; for the same Divine love and wisdom are embodied in and expressed by both. But it is the wisdom that cometh from above through the written Word that we are now to consider. And the love of this wisdom, like its object, is spiritual, not because of a difference in its Source but in its recipients. That same love which is natural in the natural mind is spiritual in the spiritual mind. It is only those, therefore, whose minds are in some degree spiritual that can desire and seek after the wisdom of heaven. But as natural knowledge is introductory to that which is spiritual, and as spiritual knowledge itself is but the means of introduction into true wisdom, those who would acquire the wisdom of eternity from the Eternal Himself, must bring their gifts to Him whose favour they would entreat, and of whose wisdom they would receive a share.

The gifts presented in ancient times were intended to show respect and to secure favour. Those which are offered to God by the spiritually minded, are indeed intended as expressions of reverence and homage; but they are not offered as the means of propitiating Divine favour, since God is ever propitious, and more ready to give than we can be to ask. Christian offerings are made to the Lord as the overflowings of a grateful heart, that feels its affections satisfied in rendering, in humble acknowledgment, the blessings which have been received from the Divine bounty back to their beneficent Giver. And this return of the Lord's gifts to Him to whom they belong re-connects them with their Author, and brings the offerer into closer connection with Him.

The gift of the queen of Sheba was similar in its nature, as it is in its signification, to that presented to the Lord at His birth by the

wise men who came from the east to worship Him. And such gifts signify the offerings of love and faith which the true worshipper presents to the Lord, as the Object of worship, and as the Origin and Owner of everything which enters into the formation of love and faith. The wise men from the east presented to the Lord, gold, frankincense, and myrrh; and the queen of Sheba came to Solomon with a very great train, with camels that bare spices, and very much gold and precious stones. The spices signify the grateful and delightful perceptions of the Lord's love and truth, which make worship itself delightful. Every one recognises in the incense of the representative Church the symbol of the incense of praise, offered by the grateful heart to the Author of its mercies and its joys; and the spices, which were abundantly employed in the censers and on the altar of incense, denote the interior truths, which have become truths of affection, and give a grateful perception of the delights and satisfactions of holy worship.

Of the gifts brought to Solomon by the queen of Sheba, the spices were the sweet and grateful perceptions of goodness and truth, and the gold and silver were the principles of goodness and truth themselves, which are presented to the Owner and the Author of true wisdom; the very camels by which they are borne symbolize the science of the natural mind on which its higher and more valuable acquisitions rest, and which serve as the lowest mediums of connecting them with the end of all knowledge, the wisdom of loving God and keeping His commandments.

The queen of Sheba had not only heard the fame of Solomon, as a king distinguished for his wisdom and magnificence, but she had heard his fame concerning the name of the Lord. This is the great point on which our minds should be fixed in regard to the Lord Jesus as the antitype of Solomon. We should be able to say, in the language of the prophet, "Surely God is in Thee; and there is none else, there is no God. Verily Thou art a God that hidest Thyself, O God of Israel, the Saviour.*" The name of Jehovah is in Him: Jesus is the name, the manifestation, the expression, the form, the person of Jehovah. In coming to Him we come to the Infinite and Eternal, in Himself incomprehensible, brought near to our apprehension, and still nearer to our affections, in the blessed person of the Divine Man, with whom we are able to associate all that is pure and merciful and good, and who has encircled us within the outstretched arms of His all-comprehensive Humanity. This is the Grand Object to whom we are privileged to come, whose fame is as wide as the universe, for He is the Saviour, as He is the Author, of all the earths in the universe. Are we influenced by that love for the Lord which will inspire us with a desire to see and hear Him for ourselves? and will it draw us to Him

as nothing but the cords of love and the bands of a Man can draw us? For mere human strength and ardour shall fail, but they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.

Let us now consider the queen's object in coming to Solomon, and the actual result of her visit. She came, it is said, to try him with hard questions. The queen's purpose no doubt was to test the wisdom of Solomon in the way which was much practised in those times. She came to propose enigmas, and test his wisdom in their solution. Those who come to the Lord have their hard questions, though they do not put them forth as riddles, to try the skill of Him whom they interrogate. The natural man indeed plays something of this part even with the Author of Revelation itself. Once, at least, it was the fashion for the natural man to maintain that both nature and Revelation were full of enigmas, which he believed even infinite Wisdom itself could never solve. Hard but honest and earnest questions—how many of these have been solved by that very Book in which the wisdom of the Lord is revealed! How many hard questions and dark enigmas has the revealed wisdom of God solved to the satisfaction of the yearning soul! The highest intellects of the heathen world laboured long and hard to solve the mysteries of God, of creation, of the soul's immortality, and future states of existence. But with all the aids derived from the traditional light of ancient, and the influence and diffused light of contemporary revelation, how obscure and distorted were their views of those great truths which are so plainly delivered in the Bible! These have ever been hard questions with mankind; and only in proportion as men have been able or willing to bring them for solution to the revealed or incarnate Wisdom have they been able to obtain true and really satisfactory answers. Such questions as these Christians do not indeed need to ask, as involving points that still require solution. But, independently of these, there are hard questions enough in every earnest one's experience. We who possess and believe the Scriptures do not question the existence of God, or of the human soul, or of heaven or hell, or even the wisdom and goodness of the Lord in His dealings with His creatures. And yet, when we come into the real business of spiritual life, there are many hard questions, both of the intellect and the heart, that can only be set at rest by submitting them in humility to the decisions of Divine Wisdom. The young Christian may know little of these except when they come in the shape of intellectual difficulties which he is not well able to surmount, or disappointments which he finds it hard to bear. In the ordinary course of religious experience there are, in later periods of life, more difficult questions to be solved, and nicer distinctions to be

drawn between God and self, and between the love of the neighbour and the love of the world ; for life presents motives for increasing attachment to the two earthly loves which are antagonistic to those of heaven.

But the result of every earnest appeal to the wisdom of the great King will be such as that which attended the trial of the queen of Sheba : Solomon told her all her questions ; there was not one hid from the king which he told her not. The queen, too, had communed with Solomon of all that was in her heart. And this laying open of the heart is one of the means of obtaining a full and satisfactory solution of the real questions of life, and making its paths plain, if not easy. The difficulties of life and the pains attending it arise essentially from the discordance between the human and the Divine will and wisdom. If the human will and understanding could feel and see finitely as the Divine will and understanding feel and see infinitely, there would be no mental conflict either in our perceptions or volitions—there would be no perplexities to clear up, no doubtful points of belief to determine, no conflicting impulses to decide between. It is only our nearer approach to a state of harmony with the Divine will and wisdom that brings us into a clearer perception of all truth and a more perfect love of all goodness. Every real coming to the Lord is a practical coming ; a coming with the heart as well as with the understanding, and with the works as well as words.

But the answers to her questions did not constitute the whole benefit and satisfaction which the queen of Sheba derived from her visit to the court of Solomon. She had heard reports of his acts and of his wisdom in her own country, but now she saw with her own eyes and heard with her own ears. Such is the difference between indirect and direct knowledge, between what we learn from others and what we know from the Lord : and such is the difference between knowledge and wisdom ; and between what the Apostle calls faith and sight. We must all first, in our own land, hear from others of the wonders of wisdom and love that exist in the spiritual and heavenly kingdoms of the Lord : but if we desire or expect to see them in reality and as they are, we must go up to Jerusalem and see eye to eye. Too often in the things of this world does distance lend enchantment to the view ; and the things which we pursue as the greatest blessings often elude our grasp, or when we have obtained them, perish in the using ; but those which are spiritual and eternal are seen to be more beautiful and enduring as we approach them more nearly, not theoretically but practically. The reason of this is, that the nearer we come to the Lord by a life of religion, the nearer we come to that state which reflects the Divine attributes in their purity, for we see the Divine perfections only as they are faithfully mirrored in our own minds. Nor

is the conception of the beauties of heaven an exception to this. The glories of that kingdom are indeed, in themselves, such as eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive, yet all its magnificence and beauty will remain for ever unseen and unfelt unless they be reflected in our own hearts and understandings. We must first go up to heaven as a state before we can go up to heaven as a place. And if we indeed do go up in heart and mind to the heavenly Jerusalem while we are sojourners in this world, truly will the truth of the saying be realized, "Behold, the half was not told me." And this may be a matter of experience with regard to the heavenly state itself even while we live in this material world, obscured though our perceptions are by the dulness of the material body. Experience realizes more than knowledge promises. Such was the testimony of the queen of Sheba; and such will be the testimony of every one who acquires *for* himself and *in* himself that wisdom which comes but by experience. "And she said to the king, It was a true report that I heard in mine own land of thy acts and of thy wisdom. Howbeit I believed not the words, until I came, and mine eyes had seen it: and, behold, the half was not told me: thy wisdom and prosperity exceedeth the fame which I heard." In every instance of indirect and direct knowledge the experience of the queen of Sheba is repeated. But far more is this the case with regard to spiritual knowledge. Those who know the truth of religion, the things of eternity, only by report, as others have declared and described them, know little and believe less. We must know these things for ourselves: we must see them with our own eyes and hear them with our own ears, before we can have any adequate conception or any well-grounded belief of what has been told us. And then shall we be convinced that the half was not told us—that the reality exceeds the fame of the Lord and His kingdom.

In a still more practical view—if we know the things of religion only intellectually or theoretically, we have but an indirect knowledge of and a weak faith in them. It is only when they become things of the will and of practice, that they become truly our own; that we see them in ourselves, and feel their power, and form a true estimate of their value and importance. Happy is it when the indirect and intellectual knowledge of these things leads us to seek that more intimate and practical acquaintance with them, which opens the mind to a perception of their reality and a sense of their grandeur. While the mind is content with a kind of hearsay knowledge of religion, how distant, and cold, and formal is the state and practice of the Christian! When, on the contrary, men hear and believe the report of the glad tidings, and are inspired with an earnest desire to know these things for themselves, though they may be far removed from the centre of light and perfection, yet the desire itself is a source of satisfaction as well as a means of

progress ; and although, in the words of the Lord, they be, like the queen of Sheba, in the uttermost parts of the earth, they will find their way to the city and temple of the Lord, to see the beauty of the Lord and to inquire in His temple. And if we consider the Lord's words in their spiritual sense, how expressive are they ! For the south signifies where there is light or knowledge, and by the uttermost parts of the earth is signified the extreme limits of the Church—also the lowest degree of the natural mind. To come from the uttermost parts of the earth, even when it is in the south, to Jerusalem, is to advance from the most external state to the most internal—from the lowest to the highest state and condition of mind.

How far the reality exceeds the expectation in matters of spiritual faith and eternal life, we may learn from the history before us. "When the queen of Sheba had seen all Solomon's wisdom, and the house that he had built, and the meat of his table, and the sitting of his servants, and the attendance of his ministers, and their apparel, and his cupbearers, and his ascent by which he went up unto the house of the Lord ; there was no more spirit in her." The splendour of Solomon's court, and the magnificence of his palaces and of the temple, represented the glory of the Church and kingdom of the Lord in His Humanity. In reference to the Church and the member of the Church the king's house and the house of Jehovah are the faculties themselves that are receptive of the principles of truth and love, for a king is the symbol of truth, and Jehovah is expressive of Divine love. The principles of goodness and truth, considered as the support of the spiritual life of the soul, are the meat of Solomon's table and the wine supplied by his cupbearers ; the perceptions of truth and affections of goodness are his servants and ministers, their apparel being the holy truths by which they are adorned and distinguished. The wisdom which is first mentioned in this enumeration of the objects that the queen beheld with speechless admiration is that in which all spiritual principles have their beginning ; while the ascent to the house of the Lord, which is last mentioned, is that to which they all tend. Where wisdom is the principal thing in the Church and in the mind, all intermediate things are means, the end of which is ascent to the house of the Lord—ascent into conjunction with the Lord in His Divine Humanity—ascent into a state of love to the Lord above all things—and finally an ascent into the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens ; into the mansion where the Lord dwells with the angels, with whom the regenerate as angels shall unite in serving the Lord, and shall dwell in His presence for ever. There it is that the blessed state shall be fully realized : "Happy are thy men, happy are these thy servants, which stand continually before thee, and that hear thy wisdom."

CHAPTER XV.

SOLOMON'S THRONE.

1 *Kings* x. 18.

THE regal splendour of Solomon was representative of the kingly glory of Him who was greater than Solomon, and whose kingdom is a spiritual kingdom that shall endure for ever. The wealth and magnificence which distinguished the reign of the Israelitish monarch presented a type of the spiritual riches and grandeur, the abundance of wisdom and knowledge, of goodness and truth, provided for mankind under the dominion of the King of kings, the Lord the Saviour. For this reason the particulars recorded in the Word concerning Solomon are the means of religious instruction, shadowing forth the mysteries of the Lord's kingdom, and introducing us into a knowledge of the things of the Church and heaven, as they exist without us, and as they must, in order to our salvation, be formed and established within us.

Solomon as a king represented the Lord as to His regal power and government. And the kingly power and government of the Lord, as distinguished from the priestly, are those which He exercises from His Divine truth, as distinguished from those which He exercises from His Divine love. Much is said in Scripture of the Lord as a Priest and as a King, but except from the spiritual sense, none but a worldly or natural idea of the subject can be entertained. The common idea is, that the Lord's priestly office consists in presenting the offerings of the faithful to His Father, and pleading for their acceptance on account of His own merits; and that His kingly office consists in ruling in the spiritual affairs of men in the name and by authority of the Father. This opinion, while in itself natural, is grounded in the belief of a plurality of persons in God, and cannot exist without it. But there is no God but in the Lord Jesus, and that which is called a distinction of office, is the Lord's government, as exercised by Him over angels and men in different states of spiritual perfection. The kingly government of the Lord is the government of His Divine truth, and His priestly government is the government of His Divine love: and these two kinds of government do not originate in any official distinction in the Lord, but in a difference of state in those who are the subjects of His government, both in heaven and in the world.

Solomon representing the Lord as a king, the Divine government of the Lord's truth, or of the Lord as the Truth itself, is described repre-

sentatively by the throne which Solomon made, and of which there was none made like it in any kingdom.

A throne is the sacred symbol of government and of the kingdom over which it is exercised. Heaven is the throne of God. This is the general meaning of a throne ; and the other significations which it has, as of dominion and judgment, are all included under this, since heaven as a kingdom cannot stand without them : for judgment and justice are the habitation of God's throne. The throne of Solomon was the symbol of that which is called the throne of God—His kingdom consisting of the Church and heaven—the government of His Divine truth in heaven and in earth.

As Solomon was a type of the Lord as the Saviour of men—of the Lord in the Humanity which He assumed and glorified in the world—the throne which Solomon made was symbolical of the kingdom which the Lord established when He was in the world, and which was and is distinguished from all the kingdoms or churches which existed previous to His coming in the flesh. If it were our purpose to engage the reader's attention on the nature of the kingdom and government of the Lord under the Christian dispensation, as it is in its general form, and as it consists of the many, we should point out the nature and ground of the difference. But it is intended more especially to consider the subject in its particular sense and in its individual application ; to consider the kingdom as it is to rule in the mind of every member of the Church—the throne as it is to be set up in every heart. Let us then consider the subject under this view.

“Solomon made a great throne of ivory, and overlaid it with the best gold.”

The first peculiarity of this throne is, that it was made of ivory : and ivory signifies rational truth—or spiritual truth rationally seen and applied. This signification of ivory arises from the circumstance that an elephant signifies the natural mind in general, and the tusks of the elephant, as being the instruments of his power and the weapons of offence and defence, and also as being white and of a fine texture, signify the most excellent truth of the natural man, which is rational truth.

Ivory is mentioned in several parts of Scripture, where truth of this kind is treated of. Once in three years the ships of Tarshish brought gold and silver, ivory, apes, and peacocks (x. 22). In the 27th chapter of Ezekiel, at the 5th and 15th verses, we read, as indicating the wealth of Tyre, that their ships had oars of oak and benches or seats of ivory ; and that the merchants of many countries had brought them horns of ivory and ebony. Tyre signifies the knowledge of truth by which we acquire intelligence : and this knowledge is signified by a ship, the oars of which were of oak and their benches of ivory : oars

denote those things of the understanding which are allied to the senses, and ivory those which belong to reason : horns of ivory denote the power which is derived from truth rationally understood.

We read in Scripture of palaces, houses, and beds of ivory ; palaces and houses signifying the mind itself as formed or regenerated from rational truth ; doctrine derived from such truth being meant by beds of ivory. In the 45th Psalm, which treats of the Lord's union with the Church, all His garments are said to smell of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia, out of the *ivory palaces*, whereby they have made Him glad : the perfumed garments out of the ivory palaces are truths derived from the Lord, grateful to the perception of the rational mind—or from their being seen in the clear light of reason.

Truths of this description are eminently those of the Christian Church, and more especially of that Church as it exists under the Lord's Second Advent. For the glory and also the power of Christian truth arise from the circumstance, that it is not only acknowledged to be of Divine authority, but it is seen to be of Divine wisdom. The simple acknowledgment of the truths of Revelation cause them to enter into the natural or external mind, where they remain as matters of science and authority ; but perception introduces them into the rational or internal mind, and renders them subjects of light and reason. The acknowledgment without the perception of truth is that which gives rise to a state and sense of servitude ; but the perception of truth produces a state and sense of freedom : for when one thus knows the truth, the truth makes him free ; and he whom the Son, who is the Truth itself, makes free, is free indeed.

It is not indeed to be understood that the mental perception of truth, considered simply as an operation of the mind, can give this freedom. But when we speak of the perception of truth we include in that perception the love and the practice of truth, without which there can be no real perception. For how can the understanding perceive the truth which the will opposes and the life belies ? We do not really see the truth of any part of Revelation or religion, but what we practically as well as intellectually acknowledge. It is only in proportion as we do the Lord's will that we know His doctrine to be true and Divine.

This is not left to be inferred or understood in the present instance : it is expressed. For the throne, while said to have been made of ivory, is described as a *great* throne, and as having been covered over with gold. And greatness implies goodness ; for there are two things—magnitude and number—which denote goodness and truth. Gold also signifies goodness or love. The greatness of the throne indicates therefore the essential goodness of the Lord's kingdom and government ; and gold, with which the throne was covered, indicates goodness in

which truth is grounded and in which it is manifested, goodness of heart and holiness of life.

The throne of the Lord, or His government and kingdom, as set up in the regenerate mind, is formed from truth, but that truth must be grounded and manifested in love and goodness. It must have goodness as its inward essence and goodness as its outward form. And indeed what is the Divine government if it do not include and comprehend the government of the heart and the actions? We are gifted with the capacity and the means of knowing and understanding the Lord's will, but it is only that we may love and do it.

This truth is still further taught and enforced in the present case : there is another predicate which directs us to goodness as entering into the perception and use of the truth which is accommodated to the apprehension of the reason. The top of the throne was *round* behind ; and of forms, what is round or circular is predicated of goodness, and what is angular is predicated of truth. For this reason, as well as for another, the steps by which there was ascent to the throne signify truths. And as there is a connection and correlation between truth and goodness, this is expressed in the description, that "the throne had six steps, and the top of the throne was round behind." Although the terms which express the size and form of the throne both denote goodness, they do not denote goodness of the same kind and degree. The goodness denoted by magnitude is more especially the goodness of love, that denoted by form is more especially the goodness of truth. The truths by which goodness is attained is signified by the steps by which there was ascent to the throne. Steps denote truths, for it is by means of truths that the mind is elevated from a natural to a spiritual state of the will, or is raised from earth to heaven. Jacob's ladder, which reached from earth to heaven, was an emblem of the revealed Word, which connects heaven with the world and the Lord with man ; and the steps of that ladder signified the truths of the Word, by which there is a descent of God through heaven to man, and an ascent of man through heaven to God. The steps which went up to the throne of Solomon were six ; for six is a number which signifies truths : but this number implies at the same time states of labour and trial. These, as well as truths, are meant by the six days in which God is said to have created the world, and by the six days which man was appointed to labour, preparatory to the seventh day, in which he was commanded to rest, as God had rested from all His works which He had created and made. The six days in which the Lord Himself is said to labour are all the states of instruction and labour through which He conducts those who are being regenerated, the state of regeneration itself being meant by the seventh day of rest. Heaven is hence called rest, and life on earth, which is preparatory to endless life in heaven, is called labour ;

for the state of the soul in heaven compared with its state on earth is as a state of rest compared with a state of labour—labour implying resistance to evil and temptation, and the doing of good from a sense of duty more than from a feeling of delight. The necessity of conquering evil, as a means of attaining to the state and kingdom of heaven, is plainly declared by the Lord, in His address to the Church of the Laodiceans : “To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father in His throne.” To sit with the Lord in His throne is to be in His kingdom, and to have dominion over all the lower thoughts and affections of the mind, through which there had been temptation. As this labour is spiritually meant by the six days of Creation, and is implied by the six steps of the throne of Solomon, the Lord in His address to the Laodicean Church calls Himself the beginning of the Creation of God, since from Him is all spiritual creation, which is regeneration, or the creation of a new heart and of a right spirit within us. The number six denotes states of trial and labour, as well as states of truth, because states of truth, compared with a state of good, are states of labour. Truth is given to lead us to goodness. It is given to discover to us our evils of heart and life ; for we should not know sin but by the law : but it is also given us to lead us to resist and forsake evil, since the knowledge of evil, without the inducement and power to remove it, would be of no advantage, but would rather be a curse than a blessing. The power to resist evil resides in truth and comes to us by truth ; not that truth alone has this power, but the power is in it and by it. Power originates in goodness, but goodness has no power but by truth as an instrument. As all spiritual power comes to us by truth, and as, when grounded in goodness, truth is able to conquer all the evils of heart and life, therefore twelve lions stood upon the steps of Solomon’s throne, as emblems of the complete and irresistible power of a true faith—that is, of faith grounded in love. For he who has faith, such faith as the Gospel requires, even as a grain of mustard seed, shall say to the sycamine-tree, or even to the mountain, “Be thou plucked up, and cast into the midst of the sea,” and it shall obey him ; for true faith has power to remove false and evil principles, which the tree and the mountain signify, and send them to that kingdom whence they came.

CHAPTER XVI.

SOLOMON'S NAVY.

1 *Kings* ix. 26-28 ; x. 11, 22.

No single passages of the historical part of the Scriptures have been the subject of so much research or of such varied conjectures as those which relate to Solomon's navy and its achievements. After all that has been done and suggested to elucidate the sacred texts which relate to this subject, the land that afforded Solomon a supply of gold and silver, elephants' teeth, apes and peacocks, remains to this day a matter of uncertainty. Perhaps India is entitled to rank first in the scale of probability. It seems entitled to do so in regard to its productions. And if the fleet, which made a three years' voyage, mentioned in chapter x., is the same as that mentioned in the previous chapter, which sailed from Ezion-geber, on the shore of the Red Sea, the voyage does not present itself as a matter of serious, or at least of insuperable difficulty, even in those days of coasting navigation. If, however, this navy of Tarshish sailed from some port on the coast of the Mediterranean instead of the Red Sea, to reach India it must have sailed round the whole coast of Africa, a feat which is believed to have been accomplished two hundred years later, but which we can hardly suppose could be mentioned as more than a single, but not as a repeated occurrence, in the reign of Solomon. Tarshish, of which so frequent mention is made in the Old Testament, is understood to be the ancient Tartessus on the coast of Spain, one of the numerous colonies of Tyre ; but a navy or a ship of Tarshish is not considered to mean one that sailed to that distant colony only, but to be a term applied generally to vessels of the largest class, and such as were therefore employed in the longest and most important voyages. A navy of Tarshish might thus sail from the Red Sea in a direction opposite to Tarshish itself ; and we can hardly conceive that, if India was the destination of Solomon's navy, it could take any other course than through the straits of Bab el Mandeb into the Arabian Sea, and east along the coast of Hindustan.

Such investigations as these, though not entirely destitute of interest to the reader of the Scriptures, are not the highest that can engage his attention ; and the solution of the questions that have been so largely discussed is not essentially necessary to the spiritual understanding of the passage.

The general object of the tenth chapter seems to be to show,

not only that Solomon was the wisest and richest of kings, but that all the earth came to hear his wisdom, and that the most distant parts of the world were made to enrich him with their treasures. The greatness of his power, the wealth of his kingdom, and the extent of his dominion, seem to be the great themes of the sacred historian. Not only were the king of Tyre and the queen of Sheba his admirers and allies, and contributed to his greatness and magnificence, but those who came from all the earth to hear his wisdom "brought every man his present, vessels of silver, and vessels of gold, and garments, and armour, and spices, horses, and mules, a rate year by year." The power, the riches, and the dominion of the King of spiritual Israel were symbolized by those of Solomon.

And this universal homage rendered to that eminent type of Jesus was but the shadow of that which shall yet be rendered to Him, to whom every knee shall bow and every tongue confess, of things on earth, as it already is of things in heaven; for He whom all the angels of God worship, and to whom they offer their most precious gifts of love and gratitude and devotion, shall yet be the one grand Object to whom all the earth shall come, to hear His wisdom, and to whom they will spontaneously render their continual service. In the true Church of the Lord, where His true character is known, such homage and offerings must be unreserved and constant.

The ships built by Solomon on the Red Sea formed the first and perhaps the only navy that ever existed in connection with the kingdom of Israel. Much less important in themselves, and much humbler in their immediate commercial objects, were the ships that so many ages afterwards were navigated upon the Sea of Galilee by the disciples of Jesus; but far more precious was their freight when they carried from place to place Him in whom dwelt all the riches of wisdom and knowledge, and all the blessings of redemption and salvation, and who came on earth to dispense them without limit or partiality to His creatures. In both cases, however, the ships had the same signification, and in both cases the use they performed teaches us a similar spiritual lesson. A ship in Scripture is the symbol of knowledge, and the analogy is to be discovered in its use. Knowledge is not wisdom, but knowledge is a vessel which contains wisdom and conveys it to the mind. A ship, by means of which the merchant visits different and distant lands, and exchanges the produce of his own country for that of others, and by which both are enriched, is the symbol of that knowledge which, though it does not constitute the true riches, is a medium by which they are acquired—a vessel, so to speak, that contains them, and carries them on to their proposed end, which is their application to the purposes of life. It is for this reason that those who by knowledge enter into the Divine Word, that they may contemplate the

wonders of redeeming love and acquire the wisdom of realizing its benefits, are represented as going down into the sea in ships, and doing business in great waters ; of whom it is said, that they see the works of the Lord, and His wonders in the deep. For the same reason those in the mystical Babylon who had made traffic of sacred knowledge are represented as lamenting her fall. For "every shipmaster, and all the company in ships, and sailors, and as many as trade by sea, stood afar off, and cried, Alas, alas, for that great city, wherein were made rich all that had ships in the sea, by reason of her costliness ! for in one hour is she made desolate."

The navy which Solomon built, and by which he had communication and commerce with the most distant lands, may be regarded as symbolizing that knowledge which under the Gospel is to convey to the most distant nations the blessings of religious light and virtue, and to extend the knowledge of the Lord, that is to cover the earth as the waters cover the sea. But besides this very general view which may be taken of its typical meaning, we are no doubt to understand the ships of Solomon, like those of the disciples, in which our Lord travelled, from which He taught, and from which He stilled the tempest, as representing the knowledges of His own Divine Word, in which He eminently is, by which He is brought near to us and we to Him, from which He instructs us in the great doctrines of life and immortality, and the true means of realizing them, and from which He restores tranquillity to the troubled soul.

The articles with which the ships of Solomon were freighted have, however, a specific spiritual signification. The gold and silver signify the goodness and truth of the inner man, the ivory, apes, and peacocks those of the outer man. Gold and silver are so frequently employed by the prophets as emblematical of the most precious spiritual graces, that every one must at once recognise their meaning. Of all the graces love is the purest and the most precious, and of this gold is the universal emblem. Because the reign of Solomon represented the reign of love—because his kingdom represented the kingdom of the Lord, in which love to Him is the ruling and cherished principle—therefore it was, in order to represent it, that Solomon made targets and shields of beaten gold, and that all his drinking vessels were of gold, and all the vessels of the house of the forest of Lebanon were of pure gold ; and that silver, of which none of them were made, was nothing accounted of in the days of Solomon, who made it to be in Jerusalem as stones. And by this mode of expressing the abundance of gold, and the relative worthlessness of silver, we are instructed, that when love to the Lord reigns in the heart, good is the ground of defence, intelligence, and reason, and that spiritual truth, which is silver, takes the place of natural truth, which is stone. Of the three natural produc-

tions of the country to which the ships of Solomon went, ivory signifies rational truth, which is the highest truth of the natural mind or outer man. Solomon therefore made a great throne of ivory, which he overlaid with the best gold. The appropriateness of this will at once be apparent; for judgment is peculiarly the function of the rational faculty of the mind; it is this that weighs and compares evidence, that discriminates and separates between truth and error, and that forms from the whole a conclusion which constitutes a judgment. Yet judgment is not to be formed and pronounced from truth alone; for truth alone, though it may be not unjust, is yet severe, in its judgments. Judgment should be according to truth, but it should be tempered with mercy. The throne of judgment should indeed be of ivory, but it ought to be overlaid with gold. The rational faculty is, strictly considered, intermediate, occupying a place, and forming a medium between the inner and outer, or the spiritual and natural mind. The ivory, which is the symbol of rational truth, occupies here a middle place between the gold and silver, which signify the good and truth of the inner man, and the apes and peacocks, which signify the good and truth of the outer man. It is not of essential importance for us to know, nor shall we attempt to determine the disputed question, whether these are the very creatures which the original terms were intended to designate. It is sufficient for our purpose that one is a beast and the other a bird, which we know correspond to the principles of good and truth, or to the affections and thoughts. Their reference to the natural mind is determined not simply by the nature of the animals themselves, but by the place they occupy in the enumeration, and by the circumstance that animals specifically signify the natural affections and perceptions of the mind, because the natural mind of man is in its nature similar to that of animals.

The voyage which was undertaken for the purpose of bringing these rare and precious things from foreign countries to the land of Israel was performed once in three years. And as a trine is the symbol of state; and three is a figure which involves the idea of that trine, in which the circle of every state is completed and its purpose is fulfilled, this period is expressive of the completeness of the regenerated state, by which the highest and lowest, the most interior and the most exterior, principles of the mind are brought into connection and harmony.

But the navy of Solomon, in these expeditions, was accompanied by the navy of Hiram, as that mentioned in the previous chapter is said to have been accompanied by the servants of Hiram, shipmen that had knowledge of the sea. Israel was not a naval or commercial nation, but Phœnicia, the Britain of the ancient world, was eminently so. Tyre, "that crowning city whose merchants were princes," had

numerous trading colonies on either shore of the Mediterranean and beyond it, another commerce extended even to the British Isles. It was no doubt her commercial character that gave her the representative character that she has in the Scriptures. We have already spoken of Tyre and its king Hiram, when treating of the building of Solomon's temple, of which he supplied so much of the material. Tyre, we have seen, represented the knowledge of good and truth, of which a ship itself is the symbol. As everything is recorded in the Word for the sake of the spiritual sense, the shipmen and the fleet of Hiram accompanied those of Solomon to represent the fact that even the higher faculties of the mind are aided by the lower in carrying out their useful objects. There is also in the Church, as in the world, a variety of gifts ; and all its members are capable of being useful to each other ; and all work together for the general as well as for mutual good when, however diverse their gifts, they are all animated by the same spirit. Some are suited for study and some for action, some find their satisfaction in pursuing their religious object by the most practical means, others find their peculiar delight in the acquirement of knowledge. Of this last description are the Hiramites and the Tyrians. Like the spirits of Mercury, they are pleased with knowledges alone, and see in every object and in every pursuit what ministers to the desire and the delight of knowing. They are in some respects and in some of their uses like the Gibeonites, the hewers of wood and drawers of water to the house of God. Or they are like those outsiders, those lecturers who deal in other people's wares, but who care little for them themselves, except so far as they can be made matters of profitable merchandise. They labour for others rather than for themselves, yet without intending to confer on others the benefits they are able to extract from their labours. This character, in its uses and its dangers, might be exemplified from the history of Solomon as given in the Scriptures ;—in its usefulness, as exemplified in the important services Hiram rendered to David and Solomon, in assisting them to procure the materials for building up the temple of the Lord ; and in its dangers, from the pride of Tyre, against which so many and awful denunciations are uttered by the prophets, and by the state of utter ruin to which her loftiness and corruption finally reduced her. We see, I apprehend, the character of that state which Tyre and Hiram represented in one incident recorded in the previous chapter. When Solomon had completed his great works, he gave to Hiram, for the valuable assistance he had rendered him during their progress, twenty cities in the land of Canaan. But when Hiram came to see them they pleased him not. "And he said, What cities are these which thou hast given me, my brother ? And he called them the land of Cabul unto this day." These cities in Galilee of Canaan signified

doctrines of the Church, which are of a more internal character and of a more practical nature than the knowledges which are represented by ships of the sea. And the king of Tyre being displeased with these cities which were given him by Solomon, who, there is reason to think, would not be wanting in liberality to the friend and lover of himself and his father, only shows in the representative language of inspiration, that those who are delighted with knowledges alone, can see no beauty and feel no pleasure in those truths which come immediately from the Lord and lead immediately to Him. We speak of such a state as relative, not absolute—as one in which the external delight is so prominent and active as to render the internal delight comparatively, though not absolutely, unfelt. We do not therefore mean an outward delight in knowledge that nauseates and rejects every inward principle of religion. Hiram did not refuse the cities of Solomon, though they were not pleasing to him. The positive dislike and rejection of inward truth and good is the abuse of the love of knowing. In this case knowledge puffeth up; and such was the ultimate result with Tyre. Hence the judgments against her. “Say unto the prince of Tyrus, Thus saith the Lord God, Because thine heart is lifted up, and thou hast said, I am a god, in the midst of the seas; with thy wisdom and with thine understanding thou hast gotten thee riches, and hast gotten gold and silver into thy treasures: thou hast been in Eden the garden of God, every precious stone was thy covering; thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty; thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness. Therefore thus saith the Lord, thou shalt die the death of the uncircumcised by the hand of strangers.” It was because Tyre signifies the knowledge of goodness and truth, and these are meant by her riches, that it is said, her meretricious hire should become holiness to the Lord. For when knowledge, which the unfaithful have made a matter of traffic, is taken away from them, and is given to the faithful, it becomes a means of promoting the life of holiness, being devoted to the service of the Lord, like the jewels of gold and silver, and the garments, that were taken from the Egyptians, and were put upon the sons and daughters of Israel, some of the precious things being devoted to the adorning of the tabernacle itself.

We have spoken of the fleet that was built at, and that sailed from, Ezion-geber on the Red Sea by the land of Edom, as being possibly the same as that mentioned in this place. The place where the fleet was built and whence it sailed is mentioned on account of the spiritual sense. The Red Sea, so famous in the history of the Israelitish deliverance from Egypt, signifies science, or the simple knowledge of spiritual things, and which is specifically meant by Ezion-geber. It is from science that knowledge is derived, and from science that the mind sets

out in the search for spiritual good and truth, just as Israel set out from Egypt in their journey to Canaan. The religious journey commences with religious science. And when this science, or scientific knowledge of religion, is grounded in natural goodness—represented in the present instance by this port being on the land of Edom—the commencing state is such as to promise prosperity.

If the spiritual life be compared to a voyage, that achieved by the fleet of Solomon must be representative of an important circle in the progress of the soul, from which therefore we may learn how we may become rich in the wealth of heaven, by entering into the deep mines and far-off regions of wisdom that are now opened up to us in the spiritual sense of the Divine Word.

CHAPTER XVII.

SOLOMON'S ARMY.

1 *Kings* x.

DAVID was a man of war, and his soldiers formed an army of warriors; and we have in the annals of his reign a long list of his mighty men, some of whom performed prodigies of valour (2 Sam. xxiii.). But Solomon was a man of peace; and although, as we shall see, his reign was not altogether undisturbed by foreign aggression, his army seems to have been intended, and to have served, for the display of his regal magnificence more than for the defence of his kingdom. The "host," of which we read in the time of Solomon, was that which had existed in the time of David. Soon after his accession to the throne he put Benaiah, whom he sent to slay Joab at the altar, in his room over the host (1 Kings ii. 35, 44). The appointment of Benaiah to be over the host in the place of Joab, was in accordance with the higher representative character of the kingdom under Solomon. Joab was of the family of Jesse and nephew of David, and was thus near to the throne; but Benaiah was the son of Jehoiada the high priest, and was thus near to the altar; so that he represented truth derived from goodness of that holiest character which was represented by the priesthood. But besides the host which had come to him from his father David, "Solomon gathered together chariots and horsemen: and he had a thousand and four hundred chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen, whom he bestowed in the cities for chariots, and with the king at Jerusalem" (x. 26). The number of horses is not here mentioned, but many years before the time to which this relates, "Solomon had forty thousand stalls of horses for his chariots," the number of horsemen being then,

as at the later period, twelve thousand (iv. 4). Solomon, therefore, added to his host an army of horsemen with war-chariots, which do not appear to have formed any part of the host of Israel under either Saul or David. This no doubt indicates a great advance of the kingdom in wealth and civilization. But it indicates something more. It symbolizes a higher representative character of the kingdom under Solomon than it sustained under David. Horses and chariots represent understanding and doctrine, and horsemen, those who are intelligent, and guide the understanding. This meaning of the horse and his rider is well exemplified in the Book of Revelation. When the Lamb had prevailed to open the book that was sealed with seven seals, which none in heaven or on earth could open, or even look upon, there came out one after another four horses, each with a rider. These horses represented the understanding of the Holy Word in the successive ages of the Church, and the colour of the horse and the character of the horseman represented what the quality of the understanding of the Word in the several ages of the Church had been. The first horse, which was white, and whose rider had a bow, and who went forth conquering and to conquer, represented the understanding of the Word in the first age of the Church. His whiteness is emblematical of the intellectual purity and freeness from error which characterized the Church of the earliest times, when, in consequence, they were able to conquer, as the apostles and early Christians did, the opposition of the heathen world and everywhere win souls to Christ. The red horse, to whose rider it was given to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another, and to whom was given a great sword, describes the beginning of sorrows to the Church itself, when opinions became divided and contentions arose, and love, which is life, began to grow cold, and death as well as dispeace began to invade the sanctuary, where love gave peace and unity gave power. The black horse represents the understanding of the Word in the Church darkened, the light of truth having given place to the darkness of error, in consequence of which the principles of goodness and truth, that support the spiritual life of the soul, are lightly esteemed, a measure of wheat being offered for a penny and three measures of barley for a penny. The pale horse, which came last, expressively symbolizes the understanding of the Word in the Church at the time of its end, when the life of love as well as the light of truth is extinguished. His rider is death, and hell follows with him; and power is given unto them over the fourth part of men, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth.

The same subject is treated of by the same symbolism by the prophet Zechariah; but the four chariots, with their red, black, white, and grised

and bay, or rather strong, horses, that came out from between two mountains of brass (vi.), represent the doctrine and understanding of the Word, not in a falling but in a rising Church ; for here the rebuilding of Jerusalem and the temple, or the restoration of the Church, is spoken of. They are the four spirits of the heavens, which go forth from standing before the Lord of all the earth. The black horses are here followed by the white, and go forth into the north country, and the grisled go forth toward the south, while the strong horses walk to and fro through the earth. The whole prophecy evidently relates to the coming of the Lord, the man whose name is the BRANCH ; and the going forth of these chariots and horses figuratively describe the diffusion of the Gospel with its light and power.

But the spiritual meaning of the horse and his rider is perhaps still more obviously brought out in the Revelation (xix.), where John "saw heaven opened, and beheld a white horse ; and He that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns ; and He had a name written, that no man knew but He Himself : and He was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood : and His name is called The Word of God." The white horse, the understanding of the Word as it had been in the primitive Christian Church, is here again restored ; for the restoration of the Church is treated of by the descent of the New Jerusalem ; but it is restored in more than its former power and glory, for He who sits on this white horse is the very Word of God, who has gone forth to judge between right and wrong, and to make war against ignorance, error, and evil. From this state of intellectual purity in the last Church there is no predicted departure. The vesture of Him who sits upon the white horse—the outer garment of the letter of the Word—is, indeed, crimsoned with the blood of its martyred truths ; but the white horse of the Word is followed by no others bearing the marks of degeneracy. On the contrary, He who sits upon the white horse is followed by the armies of heaven, riding also upon white horses, and are clothed in fine linen white and clean.

Admitting the spirituality of the Scriptures and the representative character of Solomon, it is almost obvious from the Scriptures themselves what the meaning of the king's numerous horses and chariots with their horsemen must be. If natural war against the enemies of Israel is typical of spiritual war against the enemies of the Church, then, as the weapons of the Church are not carnal but spiritual, the chariots and horses must be intellectual and not physical ; and in relation to the Lord, as Solomon's antitype, must mean what the prophet, addressing the Divine Being, calls His horses and His chariots of salvation, upon which He rode, when He went forth for the salvation of His people, even for the salvation of His anointed (Hab. iii. 8, 13).

Solomon's forty thousand stalls for horses, his fourteen hundred chariots, and his twelve thousand horsemen, are expressive not only of the abundance but of the quality of the spiritual instruments and agents which they represent. Whatever is numbered by thousands is expressive of qualities or things that are grounded in goodness, the number of thousands expressing other elements that enter into and modify them. Forty generally indicates something of temptation and its combats, fourteen, like seven, of what is holy, and twelve of what is true, or the truths of faith in plenitude and power.

There are two particulars connected with Solomon's army of horsemen that might seem to deprive it of any merit or of any good significance. Moses, speaking to the people of the time when they would desire a king, laid it down as a rule for his observance, that he should not multiply horses to himself, neither should he cause the people to return to Egypt to the end that he should multiply horses (Deut. xvii. 16). Yet this wisest of their kings multiplied horses, and if he did not send his own people to Egypt to procure them, he had them brought from thence ; for "Solomon had horses brought out of Egypt. . . And a chariot came up and went out of Egypt for six hundred shekels of silver, and an horse for an hundred and fifty." That which is wrong in the letter cannot represent that which is absolutely right in the spirit, but it can represent that which is relatively right. There are things which are the result of evil that are not themselves evil. Reasoning comes of evil, and yet in itself it is not evil. Our Lord says, "Let your communication be, Yea, yea ; Nay, nay : for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil." If men had never fallen from their original state, they would have perceived the truth, and seen the difference between what was true and not true without reasoning. But now that the power of perception is lost, men require to reason in order to discover whether a thing be so or not. Reason is indirect and imperfect perception. It cometh of evil, but it is the means of overcoming the evil from which it comes. The law itself cometh of evil. The law of love was originally inscribed upon the mind. Its being written on tables of stone was a necessity produced by its having been effaced from the table of the heart ; and yet "the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good" (Rom. vii. 12). The injunction that the king was not to multiply horses to himself, nor cause the people to return to Egypt to the end that he should multiply horses, was grounded in a law of order and necessity. Egypt represented science ; and the horses of Egypt represented the understanding reasoning from science respecting religion, or seeking to enter through natural science into spiritual truth, which is as impossible as for a camel to go through the eye of a needle. But although one cannot enter through natural science into spiritual

truth, it is possible to confirm and illustrate spiritual truth by natural science, when a spiritual state has once been attained. This state was represented by the reign and kingdom of Solomon ; therefore it was allowable for him to multiply horses, and to go down to Egypt for horses and for chariots. When the mind is established in the truth of religion, the understanding and the doctrines of science may be made the means of defending as well as of confirming the truth.

So far as the history of Solomon's reign affords the means of judging, his army was never engaged in offensive warfare, but, if employed at all, as there is reason to believe it was, against the enemies of Israel, it was only for the purpose of defence. It is indeed remarkable that there is nothing said of Solomon making any but defensive implements of war. " King Solomon made two hundred targets of beaten gold : and he made three hundred shields of beaten gold ;" but we do not read of his making either swords or spears. The higher state of spiritual warfare is purely defensive. So long as the Christian is progressing from truth to goodness, he attacks as well as defends. The true principle of spiritual warfare is defence ; and this is the true principle of natural warfare also. But the principle of self-defence sometimes requires offensive operations. True principle, either spiritual or natural, never seeks occasion of war, or enters on a war of aggression. But in the war of the religious life the spiritual and the celestial man, or the man of faith and the man of love, act differently. The warfare of the celestial man is more purely defensive in its character than that of the spiritual man. Love employs the shield more than the sword, faith employs the sword more than the shield. The man of true faith uses the sword of truth, indeed, under the influence of love. The Israelitish warriors anointed their swords and shields with oil, to represent that even the spiritual man must have his sword of truth anointed with the oil of love. But the celestial man fights, so far as his defensive warfare can be called a combat, from love itself. Solomon's targets and shields were made of beaten gold, the emblem of love. The Lord, even when He fought with the whole infernal host, never entered into conflict with the enemies of Himself and His people, except when He was assailed by them. Nor does He in the minds of the faithful. Whatever in their conflicts is more than this is from their own self-hood. The promise to the faithful is, " His truth shall be thy shield and buckler " (Ps. xci. 4). But His truth is the form, His love is the substance. It is the shield and the buckler of beaten gold.

The Christian life is a warfare as well as a pilgrimage ; and in passing through it we have to fight under the banner of Saul and David as well as of Solomon. In all our conflicts the Lord is our Leader, and He has trod the thorny path and fought the good fight before us. But He appears to every one according to his state. The same in

Himself and in all His operations, He appears to all men according to the nature and measure of their reception of His love and truth. Those who receive more of His truth than of His love see Him as a Man of war; and those who receive more of His love than of His truth, see Him as a Man of peace. Those who fight from truth, apparent and real, are led by Him as Saul or David; those who resist from love are led by Him as Solomon. He leads all who are earnestly pursuing their way to His kingdom of love and wisdom, of righteousness and peace; but He desires to lead them through their necessary conflicts with self, the world, and the flesh, in the spirit and in the state in which He can protect them from evil and enrich them with good, and enable them to sit every man under his vine and under his fig-tree, and none shall make them afraid.

CHAPTER XVIII.

SOLOMON'S IDOLATRY.

1 *Kings* xi. 29-32.

THE tendency of the Israelitish people to idolatry is painfully manifest throughout their whole history, from the time that Aaron made the golden calf to that in which Manasseh the king set up a graven image in the temple of the Lord itself (2 *Kings* xxi. 5). To regard this subject from a negative view we might suppose this to be an evidence of the inefficacy of the religion that was established among them. But religion is not always to be judged of by the conduct of its professors, although their conduct may always be justly judged by the religion they profess. The conduct of the Jews in this respect only shows how deeply rooted in the human mind was the idolatry which so extensively prevailed at that period amongst the nations of the earth. So deeply rooted was the worship of the dumb idol, that the knowledge of the living God, who created the earth and the heavens, was insufficient to preserve the chosen people from an infatuation which might be supposed only possible in a state of gross ignorance or error.

Not the least remarkable of the numerous instances of idolatry among the Israelites was that of Solomon. Solomon, who had desired and had received in an eminent degree the gift of wisdom, who had built and dedicated the temple, where Jehovah might dwell among His people, where and towards which every true Israelite might pray in the fulness of his heart or in the bitterness of his spirit,—for him to fall away from the worship of the true God, and build “an high place for Chemosh, the abomination of Moab, in the hill that is before Jerusalem,

and for Molech, the abomination of the children of Ammon," is almost unaccountable, and can only be explained on the principle that there are evils in the human will that are ever inclining the mind to congenial errors. In Solomon's case special reasons are, it is true, assigned for his departure from the worship of that God whose name he had so greatly exalted. He had married many strange wives, women of the corrupt nations around him ; and when he was old, his wives turned away his heart after other gods. But neither the waning powers of old age nor the influence of strange wives could have led to this lamentable apostasy, had there not been a lingering attachment to idol-worship in the mind of the king, as the seed of an idolatrous generation. The very fact of his taking these daughters of idolatrous kings showed his leaning to their religious worship, or, at the least, his too loose attachment to that which the law of Moses commanded. He who can cleave to a woman in love without any regard to her religion can have very little respect for his own ; and it can be no great marvel if one should supplant, or each should neutralize, the other.

While it is useful to draw from the historical circumstances of the Old Testament the moral they teach, there are other lessons which they were designed to convey. All these circumstances are representative of divine and spiritual truths. In their highest sense they relate to the Lord, as the Saviour of the world, in their subordinate sense they relate to the regeneration of man. Yet it may appear somewhat extraordinary, and even inconsistent, that circumstances which bespeak the corruption of the human heart or the fatuity of the human understanding, should be employed as representative of works or of events in which we may trace the hand of our all-merciful and all-perfect Redeemer. But in this respect the literal is often different and sometimes opposite to the spiritual sense. Nor is this to be wondered at in historical relations, considering that the corrupt state of human nature might fail to supply the means of providing a homogeneous basis for the spiritual sense, when we find in the descriptive and declarative language of the Scriptures numerous instances of the same apparent anomaly. When He who is mercy itself is spoken of as being angry and furious ; when He who is good itself is said to do evil ; when He who is light itself is declared to create darkness ; when He who is unchangeable is said to repent ; we have, in apparently spontaneous expressions, the very opposite of the reality presented to our minds. If, then, the Divine character and works can be described in language that bespeaks human frailty, may they not be represented by human acts in which human frailty is actually manifested in frail human nature ? If God is described as an imperfect being, He may fitly be represented by beings who were really imperfect. Solomon, even the present phase, and in all the other phases, of his character,

some of which have been formerly noticed, is representative of that of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. The general truth represented in Solomon's having so many wives of so many different nations and religions, and yielding in his old age to their superstitious worship, is that which teaches the universality of human redemption and the possibility of universal salvation. The same truth is presented in the visions of John in the Revelation. After the sealing of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel, besides the one hundred and forty-four thousand out of all the tribes, John beheld a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, standing before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands, who cried with a loud voice, saying, "Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb." The same theme was sung by the four beasts and the four and twenty elders, when it was found that the Lamb had prevailed to open the book; for they sang a new song, saying, "Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation." The universality of human redemption, and the possibility of salvation to all men, of whatever kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation, is one of the great and consolatory truths represented in the Old Testament and clearly revealed in the New. There is nothing to surprise us in the narrow spirit of Jewish sectarianism and national exclusiveness, which led them to believe that the Divine favour was limited to themselves, and that even few of their own number would be saved. But that among the disciples of Christ, who displayed as well as revealed the Divine character in its purity, there should be found those who maintain that the whole heathen world is excluded from any share in the Lord's work of salvation, except so far as in this life they receive the joyous message, is both astonishing and humiliating. It would almost seem as if that manifestation of the boundless love of God rendered salvation more difficult and more circumscribed than before. Certain expressions have been construed into statements to that effect. Of these the celebrated declaration of Peter is most commonly appealed to: "There is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved, but that of Jesus Christ of Nazareth." This is indeed a great truth, but it is as hopeful for those beyond, as for those within, the pale of the Christian Church. The apostle had performed a miracle by the name of Jesus Christ. But it was not simply by the name, but by the power of Him whose name he used, that Peter made the lame to walk. And the simple question is, whether the same power may or may not be savingly exerted where the mere name of Christ is unknown. The name of Christ had miraculous power in those days, because in

the Sacred Scriptures there is symbolism in names, the name of Christ being the verbal sign of the power and virtue that dwell in Him. Yet even in those days no spiritual miracle could be performed by simply uttering the name of Christ. The diseased body might be healed miraculously by uttering in faith the name of Jesus Christ, but the soul could only be restored by the spiritual reception of that which the name expressed. But it may be asked, Can the saving power of the Redeemer, and the saving virtue of His Divine work in the flesh, be efficaciously exerted where His name and His work are unknown? The name of Christ comprehends in itself all that Jehovah has become, and all that He has done, for mankind by the Incarnation. And it is the glory and the blessing of God's manifestation in the flesh, that it has brought Him near to all who are in the flesh, of whatever kindred and nation they may be, and even whatever earth they may inhabit. When the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, it was in order to provide that the Word might be with us alway, and that it might work more effectually by all the means which a wise Providence had dispensed or permitted to the various nations of the earth. In every nation he that fears God and works righteousness is accepted of Him; and wherever God is feared and righteousness is performed, under whatever name God may be known, however imperfectly men's views of righteousness may be, *there* is the religious principle into which the spirit of Christ and of Christianity may be infused even in this life, and through which they may be consciously developed in the other.

While these considerations enable us to hope for the increase of the number saved of the universal human race, and to know of a certainty that the sincere of all religions will find a place in heaven, they do not induce indifference to the conversion of the heathen, or the spread of Christianity. The same Divine work which has brought salvation nearer to the heathen will bring the heathen nearer to the more perfect means of salvation which are to be found in the Christian religion. That missionary and evangelizing spirit which has been so powerfully awakened among Christians in these last days, and which has sought and still seeks to effect the conversion of the heathen at home and abroad by the universal diffusion of the Scriptures, as well as by the instrumentality of human teachers, is but an effect and an outward co-operative means of the inward light now shining with increased brightness in all human minds, and struggling to break down the prison walls of error and superstition by which they are confined. Still, while this work of improvement is going on, we are justified in believing that the Lord is the God and Saviour of all men. We may demand in the strain of the apostle, "Is He the God of the Christians only? Nay, but of the Gentiles also." And He who desires the salvation of all, will not leave any to perish, whose state admits of introduction into the kingdom of heaven.

Such is the general view we are enabled to corroborate from the circumstances of the history before us, by the aid of the spiritual sense.

This general view contains many particulars, some of which are representatively taught in the particulars of Solomon's history, as relating to the cause and nature of the king's idolatry. "Solomon loved many strange women, (together with the daughter of Pharaoh,) women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Zidonians, and Hittites; of the nations concerning which the Lord said unto the children of Israel, Ye shall not go in to them, neither shall they come in unto you: for surely they will turn away your heart after their gods. Solomon clave unto these in love." Of the six nations of which Solomon took his many strange women, three were descended, by a direct and a collateral line, from Eber, the ancestor of the Hebrew and Israelitish nations. Moab and Ammon were the children of Lot, the brother of Abraham, and Edom was son of Isaac, and the brother of Jacob. We have to go much farther back in the historical Scriptures for the ancestor of the Egyptians, Zidonians, and Hittites. The Scriptures speak of them as descended from Ham, the second son of Noah. In Genesis we read that the sons of Ham were Cush, and Mizraim, and Phut, and Canaan, and that Canaan begat Sidon his first-born, and Heth (x. 6, 15). Mizraim is the name of Egypt, Heth of the Hittites, Sidon of the Zidonians. We are indeed told that history, in the strict sense, does not begin in the Bible till the time of Eber; and Eber himself is not perhaps a strictly historical person. If, in the Biblical narrative, history begins with Eber, it is not unreasonable to suppose that he represents a transition state, and that in his history, with that of some of his immediate descendants, the mythical is blended with the actual. The age which he reached is rather allegorical than literal: "Eber lived four and thirty years, and begat Peleg. And Eber lived, after he begat Peleg, four hundred and thirty years, and begat sons and daughters." Our object in tracing the different nations, from which Solomon chose his wives and concubines, to their Scriptural origin, does not require that the Scripture account of their origin should be strictly literal history. The Word of God was not written by inspiration to inform us of the events of remote ages, or enable us to know who were the fathers of the families and nations of antiquity, but to supply us with the means of religious improvement. Sacred history is but the framework of a higher meaning and the vehicle of a higher instruction. And whether that framework be constructed in the form or of the facts of history, the dry bones of the literal record are equally, by Divine wisdom, brought together and united, and covered with flesh and skin, and animated with breath, and live, and form together an exceeding great army, by which the Lord of hosts wars against the evils of the world and of the human heart.

Our object in tracing the nations, to which Solomon's strange women belonged, to their Scripture origin is to point out the significance of the fact, even when the Israelitish king is regarded as a type of the Lord Jesus Christ. In Scripture these nations may be traced back to a Noetic, a Hebrew, and an Israelitish origin. Now Noah and his descendants to the time of Eber signify the Ancient Church, Eber and his descendants to the time of Abraham represent the Hebrew Church, and Abraham and his descendants to the time of our Lord constitute the Israelitish Church, or that representative dispensation which took its name from Israel. The Ancient Church was a spiritual Church, as distinguished from the Most Ancient Church, which was celestial. The cardinal grace of the celestial Church is love to the Lord, that of the spiritual Church is love to the neighbour, while that of the representative Church is simple obedience. To express it more abstractly, the celestial principle is love, the spiritual principle is charity, and the natural principle is work.

Now the Lord came into the world to save the spiritual. And all are included under this name and were of this character who lived after the end of the Most Ancient Church. For in speaking of the spiritual, we do not here mean the spiritual as distinguished from the natural, but the spiritual as distinguished from the celestial, both in regard to men and dispensations. When we come to treat of the revolt of the ten tribes under Rehoboam, Solomon's son and successor, which resulted in the permanent separation of the twelve tribes into the two kingdoms of Judah and Israel, the ground and representative meaning of this separation will be more fully explained. In this place it is only necessary to consider it so far as to see what is spiritually meant by the many strange women whom Solomon loved being taken from the particular nations mentioned in the sacred history.

The spiritual whom the Lord came into the world to save were those who lived under the dispensation which commenced with Noah, or with those who are treated of under that name. For the relation regarding the Flood, and the ark, and the one family who were saved from the wreck of the primeval world, is not to be understood as strictly literal, but as descriptive, in the language of correspondence, of spiritual states of the Church and of mankind, spiritual states being thus described by natural images, every one of which has a spiritual meaning. The Flood, which covered the whole earth, rising above the tops of the highest mountains, is the symbolical expression for a flood of false persuasions that overspread the whole Church, which the earth signifies, submerging the very highest principles of the Church, which are love to God and love to man, these being, in the language of analogy, all the high hills that were under the whole heaven. The destruction of the whole human race and of the whole

animal creation, with the exception of those preserved in the ark, is descriptive of the extinction of all spiritual and natural goodness, excepting the remnant which God, of His merciful providence, saves out of the wreck of every expiring dispensation, as the means of commencing a new one.

The Ancient Church, which commenced after the Flood, survived till the coming of the Lord. There were, indeed, besides the Noetic Church, the Hebrew and the Israelitish, but these were only prolongations of the Ancient Church. In the Writings the Hebrew Church is called the Second Ancient Church, and the Israelitish is frequently spoken of as not a Church, nor even a representative Church, but the representative of a Church. The Noetic was a spiritual Church, the Hebrew was a representative Church, and the Israelitish was the representative of a Church. These were but the successively descending degrees of the one Church which existed from the Flood to the Incarnation; and whatever vitality they possessed, they inherited from the original dispensation from which they sprung. All these, therefore, were included, in the comprehensive sense, under the name of the spiritual Church, those who belonged to them being included under the name of the spiritual whom the Lord assumed humanity to save.

The numerous wives and concubines of Solomon were taken from nations descended from all the different branches of those who constituted the Ancient Church, in order to represent that they were included under the name of the spiritual whom the Lord came to save. Those nations were indeed descendants who had corrupted themselves, and had turned from the worship of the true God, to serve false gods and worship dumb idols, and who were the enemies both of Jehovah and of His people. But the Lord declares that He came to seek and to save that which was lost; and the Apostle of the Gentiles testifies that "God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." In considering the subject of Solomon's love of many strange women in relation to the Gentile nations under the Christian dispensation, we learn from it how their salvation can be effected. The nations who know not the Scriptures cannot be led to the Lord by the truth which directly reveals Him. But they can be drawn to Him by the good which they have acquired by means of the religious knowledge which exists among them. Thus they cannot be led by the understanding and its thoughts, but they can be drawn by the will and its affections. The affections of the will are represented by women, as the thoughts of the understanding are by men; for the sexes are mentally distinguished, men by greater power of thought, women by greater strength of affection. In Scripture, where the simplest things contain a deep philosophy, this ground of the distinction of the sexes is ever to

be understood as underlying all that is recorded of the men and women of Bible history, whether of the Old or of the New Testament. How well is it exemplified by the male and the female disciples of our Lord. Mary of Bethany and Mary of Magdala, how clearly and greatly are they distinguished from Peter and Thomas, and even from John, by the strength and tenderness of their affection. It is from this characteristic of the female mind that the Church is so constantly represented by a woman, and is called the bride and wife of the Lord. The objects of Solomon's love are the Churches among the Nations. Nor need we be startled at the idea of the Church having an existence among the Gentiles. Wherever there is sincere religion, there is the Church. Although all religions may not be spiritual, all religion is spiritual. The religious principle is spiritual everywhere, even although the religious system may be strictly spiritual nowhere. Wherever there is religious goodness, there is the Church. Wherever there is a mind in which the affection of goodness exists, that mind is already in consort with Him "who is the Saviour of all men," though "specially of them that believe" (1 Tim. iv. 10). The specialty which attaches to believers arises from the peculiarity of their case, and the advantage they enjoy in possessing the Scriptures, which contain the truth that forms the foundation of a true faith. There are two elements by which conjunction with God is effected—goodness and truth, or love and faith. There is no conjunction between God and man without reciprocation and co-operation. God is the Giver of all good gifts and the Operator of all good works; man is the recipient of God's gifts and the co-operator in all good works. God operates by goodness and love; man co-operates by truth and faith. The Lord draws men to Himself by love; men come to the Lord by faith. The Lord taught this in the Divine language of correspondence when He said, "No man can come to Me, except the Father, which hath sent Me, draw him" (John vi. 44); and when He made the converse statement, "No man cometh unto the Father, but by Me" (John xiv. 6). The Father is the Divine love, the Son is the Divine truth. It is love that draws us to the truth; it is the truth that brings us to love. The Lord by love draws to Himself all men who receive His love, but only those who know and believe His truth come consciously and actually to Him. This believers do, because they have the truth which enables them to know the Object of Christian faith and the duties of the Christian life. They not only are drawn by the all-pervading love of God, but they are led by the partially diffused truth of God, partially diffused for wise purposes. For if salvation depended absolutely on the knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus, God is sufficiently provident and powerful to have caused His truth to be carried to all the nations of the earth. But as goodness or love is the first essential of religion, and therefore the primary saving grace;

and as this can exist, though in different degrees of purity, under every form of religion; the goodness and wisdom of God are equally manifested in giving and in withholding the truth, according to the different states and conditions of the nations and peoples of the earth. He who is the Maker and Saviour of them all best knows how to deal with them, so as to secure the greatest possible measure of good to each and to all. His tender mercies are over all His works, and no soul is left without the means of salvation. However limited and imperfect the outward means may be, the invisible Divine influence and operation are always present; and if these invisible powers do not draw the well-disposed heathen to the truth in this world, it will assuredly draw them to it in the next. All sincere religious love has a desire for truth; and in the other life, if not in this, that desire, in whatever heart it exists, will be satisfied.

The strange women to whom Solomon clave in love will thus be drawn to the truth. Indeed Solomon is the Truth to which they are drawn, as well as the love which draws them. The Word made flesh is the eternal Truth which, in the Humanity glorified, can enter into all human minds and into all human religions with a power which the unclothed Divinity could not exert, because not accommodated to their infirmities and imperfections. Jehovah in Jesus, God in Christ, has come near to all men, and can enter into their different forms of faith and worship with an elevating and transforming power much greater than before the Incarnation. This is the remote sense of Solomon not only cleaving in love to many strange women, but going after their gods, and giving countenance and support to their worship. "For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites. . . . Solomon built an high place for Chemosh, the abomination of Moab, in the hill that is before Jerusalem, and for Molech, the abomination of the children of Ammon. Likewise did he for all his strange wives, which burnt incense, and sacrificed unto their gods." Ashtoreth is understood to be the moon and Chemosh the sun, and Milcom is but another name for Molech. These would seem to be singularized as the worst of the heathen deities. The worship of the sun and the moon is among the worst kinds of idolatry. They lead the mind away from the personality of God, which is recognised, however grossly, in idols having the human shape; and they represent the worship of self-love and the love of the world. And of all idols that had the human form, Molech, "horrid king, besmeared with blood of human sacrifice, and parents' tears," was the most abominable. Yet even under these and such of these salvation is possible. Living as we are in the light of Christianity, it is difficult to conceive how anything of true religious feeling can coexist with such a form of religious worship, or how the Spirit of the true and

loving God can be infused into the hearts of those who perform such sanguinary rites. Yet we read of the true and living God tempting the father of the faithful to offer up his son as a sacrifice to the Object of his worship. And we are told that if Abraham had not been inclined to such worship, he could not have been so much as tempted to offer a human victim in the person of his only son. Abraham, it is true, received a command, which he believed expressed the will of God. And this is just the saving element in all such unnatural acts of devotion. The devotees believe that God requires and approves the sacrifice, and they do violence to their own feelings because they think the act is acceptable to the god they worship.

The saving element in the religion of heathen nations and the worship of idols and false gods, is further expressed by the number of Solomon's wives and concubines. He had seven hundred wives and three hundred concubines. Wherever the number seven is mentioned in the Word it is expressive of what is holy. The seven hundred wives are the religious affections in which there is something of true holiness. A holy feeling may exist in the mind in connection with erroneous views of religion, and may enter into a degraded form of worship. But there are two kinds of worshippers, those who worship from the heart and those who worship from the mind, or those who worship from love and those who worship from faith. There is this distinction among those beyond, as well as among those within, the pale of the Church. The distinction is exemplified on a large scale by the sexes. With women religion is more of the heart, with men religion is more of the mind. There can be no real religion where the heart does not share with the mind in devotion to it. But in one class the religion of the heart is primary and in another it is secondary. With one, religion reaches the heart through the mind; with the other, religion reaches the mind through the heart. Those with whom the religion of the heart is primary are the wives of Scripture, and those with whom the religion of the mind is primary are the concubines of Scripture. Both are of those who are saved, but their conjunction with the Lord is more and less intimate. They are relatively the celestial and the spiritual, not only as they are distinguished into the two heavenly kingdoms consisting of the celestial and the spiritual heavens, but as they exist in each heaven, the lowest as well as the highest; for in each of the heavenly mansions there is the same distinction that exists in the whole. The Divine in the least and in the greatest things is the same, in the Grand Man and in the individual man, and in all the parts of which either of them consists. The distinction is an image of one that exists in the nature of God Himself; and, as it is found in His universal kingdom, is an arrangement as beneficent as it is wise. But on this subject, under another aspect, more will be said in the concluding chapter.

CHAPTER XIX.

SOLOMON'S ADVERSARIES.

1 *Kings* xi. 14-27.

ALTHOUGH Solomon's was a peaceful reign, it was not entirely free from disturbance. There were no great foreign wars, no civil conflicts, no domestic rebellions, no family feuds, as in the time of David. But there were enemies that were active though not seriously harmful, and there was a smouldering fire that was ready to burst forth when the pressure which kept it under restraint should be removed. Immediately after the record of Solomon being seduced by his heathen wives to the worship of their false gods, and of the Lord being angry with him and threatening to rend the kingdom from him, we read that "the Lord stirred up an adversary unto Solomon, Hadad the Edomite : he was of the king's seed in Edom. . . . And God stirred him up another adversary, Rezon the son of Eliadah, which fled from his lord Hadadezer king of Zobah. . . . And Jeroboam the son of Nebat, an Ephrathite of Zereda, Solomon's servant, (whose mother's name was Zeruah, a widow woman,) even he lifted up his hand against the king." We are not to suppose that all these adversaries were first "stirred up" after Solomon's apostasy. Rezon, we are told, "was an adversary to Israel all the days of Solomon, beside the mischief that Hadad did : and he abhorred Israel, and reigned over Syria." But every evil that comes forth into act first exists as an inclination ; and that to which Solomon yielded in his old age must have had a potential existence in his mind in his earlier life. Old age is the time when the natural impulses of early life return ; and if, during the period of vigorous manhood, they have only been suppressed by the force of reason or the claims of interest, but not regenerated by the principles of religion, they are altogether likely to come forth into outward manifestation aggravated by evils peculiar to the declining vigour of the mental and physical powers. The presence of evils, either as inclinations or as acts, serve to stir up adversaries to restrain them, and give the opportunity of resisting and removing them ; but if they are not removed, the adversaries become instruments of correction. When the children of Israel were commanded to drive out the inhabitants of the land of Canaan, they were warned of the consequences of failing to perform this duty : "If ye will not drive out the inhabitants of the land from before you ; then it shall come to pass, that those which ye let remain of them shall be pricks in

your eyes, and thorns in your sides, and shall vex you in the land wherein ye dwell" (Num. xxxiii. 55). In the historical parts of the Word, especially in the Book of Judges, and in the Books of Kings, we read that when the people sinned, the Lord raised up adversaries to punish them; and when they learned wisdom from adversity, and cried unto the Lord, He then raised up judges to deliver them. No deliverance is recorded as having been effected in the present instance. On the contrary, one consequence of the king's sin is announced to him, and took effect in the reign of his successor. "He said unto Solomon, Forasmuch as this is done of thee, and thou hast not kept My covenant, and My statutes, which I have commanded thee, I will surely rend the kingdom from thee, and will give it to thy servant. Notwithstanding in thy days I will not do it for David thy father's sake: but I will rend it out of the hand of thy son. Howbeit I will not rend away all the kingdom; but will give one tribe to thy son for David My servant's sake, and for Jerusalem's sake, which I have chosen."

The adversaries which the Lord stirred up against Solomon, like those He stirred up against Israel in the time of the judges, had a special relation to the evil of which he had been guilty. In a good sense Edom signifies the Lord's human essence, also the strength, power, or good of the natural mind; in the opposite sense, Edom signifies the natural man originating in self-love, which despises and rejects all truth. Syria, in a good sense, signifies those who possess the knowledges of goodness and truth, and are called wise; but in the opposite sense, those who pervert those knowledges, and apply them to idolatrous purposes. Edom and Syria have therefore reference to the will and the understanding; and considered as two kingdoms, whose kings were opposed to Israel, and in particular to Solomon, they represent the will and understanding of the natural mind, as opposed to the spiritual.

An account is given of the two adversaries of Solomon. Hadad was of the seed royal of Edom; and one of those singular circumstances we have already had occasion to notice is recorded of him: "When David was in Edom, and Joab the captain of the host was gone up to bury the slain, after he had smitten every male in Edom, Hadad fled, he and certain Edomites of his father's servants with him, to go into Egypt; Hadad being yet a little child." When all were supposed to be slain a remnant escaped; and this solitary child, which was saved from David's slaughter, became an adversary to Israel all the days of Solomon. No wonder that he should. But the spiritual lesson it teaches may be considered apart from the natural considerations that arise out of the literal history; and this is, that even when an evil is rooted out, if a seed remains, the evil may spring forth again in all its former vigour, and even grow to its former extent.

When Hadad went to Egypt, Pharaoh "gave him an house, and

appointed him victuals, and gave him land. And Hadad found great favour in the sight of Pharaoh, so that he gave him to wife the sister of his own wife, the sister of Tahpenes the queen." This marriage of Hadad to the sister of the Egyptian queen is something of an opposite to the marriage of Solomon to the daughter of the Egyptian king ; so that Hadad may be considered the thorn in Solomon's side on account of that unsanctioned union. Here was the natural will opposed to the spiritual, and each united to the affection of science, which can favour and support the claims of either, for in spiritual questions and conflicts science can take either side. "When Hadad heard in Egypt that David slept with his fathers, and that Joab the captain of the host was dead, Hadad said to Pharaoh, Let me depart, that I may go to mine own country. Then Pharaoh said unto him, But what hast thou lacked with me, that, behold, thou seekest to go to thine own country? And he answered, Nothing : howbeit let me go in any wise." Hadad did not inform Pharaoh of his object in returning to his own country ; probably it was to attempt to regain his father's throne. David had laid his country under tribute and put garrisons in it ; and he may have hoped to be able to shake off the Israelitish yoke now that the mighty king and his famous general were dead. It would appear he failed in this object. Indeed it is said he reigned over Syria ; for this statement, in verse 25, relates to him. He managed, however, to do mischief to Solomon.

Solomon's other adversary, Rezon, had been connected with another of the kings whom David conquered. The account of both the events which gave rise to the enmity of Hadad and Rezon is contained in the same chapter (2 Sam. viii.). Rezon was not, like Hadad, of the seed royal. He was a servant of Hadadezer, king of Zobah, who forsook his master in his adversity, and gathered men unto him, and became captain over a band, and ultimately ruler over Damacehe Syria. The Syrians of Damascus, who came to succour the king of Zobah, were defeated at the same time, and David slew of the Syrians twenty-two thousand ; and he put garrisons in Syria of Damascus ; and the Syrians became servants to David, and brought gifts. Those kingdoms which David had subdued and garrisoned attempted to rise, under other leaders, in the time of Solomon ; but however these might abhor and harass Israel, their opposition did not seriously shake the stability of Solomon's kingdom. This was effected by another adversary, one that was stirred up against him from among the tribes of his own Israel, and from among his own servants, Jeroboam the son of Nebat. He was the provided or permitted instrument of permanently dividing the twelve tribes of Israel into two kingdoms. Of this we need not speak more particularly at present. We may only observe that this division, as it had its origin, so it had its instrument, within the kingdom of Israel

itself ; as the separation which it represented had in the higher kingdom, of which the Israelitish kingdom, under David and Solomon, was the type. The distinction which the present history points out between the adversaries that rise against the kingdom of the Lord, general or individual, from within and from without, and of the different results of their operations, is very instructive. The enemies that assail us from without are far less dangerous than those that assail us from within. All temptations have indeed a ground of evil in our own minds. There must be lust before there can be temptation ; for a man is tempted when he is drawn aside of his own lusts and enticed. But evil spirits that assail us from without have no power over us except through the evil within us ; and if we desire to remain true to our principles, our tempters only make our integrity the stronger. But when our foes are they of our own house, the danger is far greater. When the temptation begins, not from the passive but from the active desires of our own hearts, or from the congenial falsities of our own understandings, the evil spirits, though our enemies, find us, in some respects, the willing instruments of our own destruction, and thus so far their friends. David's greatest troubles during his reign arose from the disaffection of his own people, and the enmity of his own children to him and to each other. One of the chief objects of the Fore-runner of the Lord was to turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers—to create inward harmony and unity, not only among the persons but among the principles of the Church, as a preparation for the coming of the Lord as the Prince of Peace. When there is internal harmony and unity, outward enemies, even when powerful and confederate, can do no serious injury, but are rather the instruments of good, as they serve to restrain, and thus indirectly to correct, the evils through which they act. Hadad and Rezon, and, so far as their power extended, Edom and Syria, were confederate against Israel all the days of Solomon, or during a great part of his reign, and yet they produced so little effect upon his kingdom that their conflicts with his men are never described, and are mentioned not more than once. The army of Solomon had, therefore, little to do with war. It represented the warlike power of the king for either offence or defence ; but the warfare of the kingdom had been accomplished, and the army rested from its labours, and enjoyed the rest which its victories had acquired. It was like the heavenly host that surrounds the throne of the King of kings ; which, while ready to go forth in the service and under the leadership of Him who in righteousness doth judge and make war, is still more ready to convey messages of mercy, like the multitude of the heavenly host that, at the birth of the Saviour, praised God, saying, " Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."

CHAPTER XX.

THE DEATH AND BURIAL OF SOLOMON.

1 Kings xi. 42, 43.

IN the Book of Ecclesiastes, long believed to be a work of Solomon, but now considered to be the production of another hand and of a later age, there are many excellent sentiments, some of which apply with strict propriety and great force to the life of that wise man and eminent king. In one of these it is said, "Dead flies cause the ointment of the apothecary to send forth a stinking savour : so doth a little folly him that is in reputation for wisdom and honour." The odour of sanctity in which Solomon may be said to have died, would have embalmed his memory with the purest and richest perfume had it not been tainted by the folly of which he was guilty in his declining years. Perhaps this is to be lamented still more as an indication of the frailty of our common humanity, than as a sin on the part of a particular man, eminent as he was for wisdom.

Folly is inseparable from our fallen nature, even in its highest earthly condition ; and all mere men seem to exhibit instances of failure even in those virtues for which they are most distinguished. The Scriptures afford abundant evidence of this. Aaron, the first High Priest of the Jews, whose duty it was to preserve the worship of Jehovah in its purity, was the first to sanction idolatry, in making and setting up the golden calf ; and Moses, the meekest man in all the earth, was excluded from the land of Canaan for an ebullition of anger at the waters of Meribah. In the New Testament, Peter, the strongest in the faith, openly denies his Master ; and John, the gentlest and most loving of the disciples, wishes to call down fire from heaven to consume those who refused to receive his Lord. The failing of Solomon, whose distinguishing glory it was to build a house for the Lord, a settled habitation where He might dwell for ever, though inconsistent with his religious profession and eminent piety, was but too concordant with his natural corruptions. Such failings, common, in a greater or less degree, to all men, proclaim, from age to age and from day to day, the great truth, that even those who are ingrafted into the true vine, though they receive new life and bring forth new fruits, still retain their old nature, their corrupt selfhood, and are only preserved from the grossest evils and the deepest hell by the unfailing mercy and sustaining power of the Lord and Saviour. And what is the great lesson which this teaches us ? It teaches us the general lesson of

profound humility, of distrust in ourselves, and constant dependence on Him who alone is pure and holy ; and it teaches the particular lesson, that on those very points in which the Christian excels, and on which in consequence he is most liable to fall into spiritual pride, he is permitted to be tried, that he may have a constant practical sense of his own inherent weakness in that wherein his spiritual strength lies. However strong the Christian may be, yet if the hair of his Nazarite-ship is shaven off, he will become weak, and be like any other man. With the seven locks of his head—with the holy principles of his regenerate life—all his spiritual power departs, and he becomes the slave and the sport of the lusts and imaginations of his own evil heart. However highly regenerated and endowed with spiritual strength and virtue the Christian disciple may be, his natural vileness and feebleness as a son of Adam remain, and his departure from the state of faithfulness and integrity to which he has attained reduces him to a lower than his original condition. It is one thing, however, to fall entirely away from a state of righteousness, and another to betray our natural weakness in the checkered scenes of the probationary life. To expect or to affect exemption from this would be to put in our claim for being more than mortal. In this respect we see the essential difference between every child of fallen Adam, who originally was made a living soul, and the second Adam, who was made a quickening spirit. The Lord inherited our frail nature, and endured more than all human trials. In these respects He was like unto His brethren according to the flesh. By taking upon Him human nature from a daughter of Eve, He placed Himself on a level with the lowest of His creatures. But with all the hereditary tendencies and inherent frailty of His maternal humanity, tempted beyond all possible or conceivable human experience, the Lord Jesus, though bowing under the weight of all hereditary evils and most direful temptations, never yielded, either by consent or commission, to the influences that bore so powerfully upon Him, and the authors of which would have triumphed over His least transgression of the law. We may not hope to reach any power of endurance or unswerving integrity like His. Yet it is through His that we are enabled in any degree to resist temptation or to fulfil the Divine law. And while our shortcomings should remind us of the immense distance between the Christian, in his best state, and the Author of Christianity ; the pattern and the power which we find in Him who lived and died, and rose and ascended for us and before us, should teach us how great is our advantage, and how willing and ready we should be to use it.

The death like the life of Solomon may be considered as equally relating to the Lord and to the Christian disciple. In reference to

either the blemishes of the king's life do not represent actual evils. So far as they refer to evils, they represent temptations to commit them ; and only so far include the idea of actual evil, which is sin, as is necessarily connected with every act of imperfect man : for there is no man that liveth and sinneth not.

The death of Solomon, in its highest representative sense, does not of necessity represent the Lord's death, nor even His resurrection, to which His death led, and which arose out of it, as He rose from the grave. The death of representative characters may have reference to any change by which the progressive work of glorification, and, in the secondary sense, of regeneration, is carried by successive degrees to its completion. Death, indeed, involves the idea of resurrection, since death to the body is resurrection to the soul. But the death of Solomon represents the ascension of the Lord rather than His resurrection. The Lord's ascension was the complement and the completion of His resurrection. He died that He might rise, He rose that He might ascend. The Lord was our Exemplar even in His death, and resurrection, and ascension. His glorification was the pattern of our regeneration, from our birth to our entrance into heaven. Every man has his death, his resurrection, and his ascension. When the body dies the soul rises into the world of spirits, the *Hades* of the New Testament, the common receptacle for all souls on their first entrance into the eternal world ; and after the necessary preparation there, the righteous ascend into heaven, where they are ever with the Lord. Jesus, whose glorifying work required that He should pass through all states answering to those of man's regeneration and final salvation, passed through these final states and experiences also. His resurrection was into the world of spirits ; and after forty days He ascended into heaven. He several times indeed appeared to His disciples who were in the natural world, and when He was about to ascend into heaven He led them out as far as Bethany, where His ascension took place. But although the disciples, to whom He appeared, were in the natural world, they did not see Him with their natural eyes, nor hear Him with their natural ears, nor cognise Him by any of their natural senses. They saw and heard and felt Him with their spiritual senses, those senses which, when the material body is laid aside once and for ever, cognise objects at least as sensibly and perfectly as the natural senses cognised objects in the natural world. And the Lord, when He ascended, led the disciples out as far as Bethany, for the sake of the correspondence in accordance with which the Lord always both spoke and acted. There He had raised Lazarus from the dead, which represented the raising up of the Church anew, the celestial and spiritual affections of which were represented by Mary and Martha, their brother representing the truth

which was restored to them from the dead. As the disciples beheld the Lord's ascension with their spiritual eyes, they were virtually and sensibly present in the spiritual world; and from that part of the spiritual world which is intermediate between earth and heaven the Lord actually ascended.

In conformity the Apostle Paul speaks of the Lord in this wise: "Now that He ascended, what is it but that He also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that He might fill all things" (Eph. iv. 9, 10). The apostle speaks of the Lord as first making a descent, and into the lower parts of the earth. What does he mean by this? What are the lower parts of the earth to which He descended? Some understand them to mean the profound depths of the earth on which we dwell, and that Jesus literally descended into these material depths as well as above all heavens, that He might fill, or fulfil, all things. The apostle could not teach anything so meaningless as this. The lower parts of the earth, to which the Lord descended after His resurrection, were the lower parts of the world of spirits, called the lower earth, where certain of the souls of departed men had been preserved until the Lord should come into the world, and, after He had accomplished the work of Redemption and glorified His humanity, deliver them from what may be called a state of bondage, and take them up with Him into heaven, when He ascended through it far above all heavens into the light that no man can approach unto. This lower earth is what the Apostle Peter calls a prison, and those who are preserved in it he calls the spirits in prison, in that remarkable passage respecting the meaning of which there has been much speculation: "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: by which also He went and preached unto the spirits in prison; which sometime were disobedient, when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls, were saved by water. The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ: who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels, and authorities, and powers, being made subject unto Him" (1 Peter iii. 18-22). This passage, which commentators acknowledge to be obscure, and which must appear dark to those who deny the existence of a middle state, affords valuable testimony to the truth of an important doctrine of the Lord's New Church.

It has already been remarked that the Lord came into the world to save the spiritual, and that all were of the spiritual character or genius who lived from the time of Noah, or from the commencement of the Ancient Church.

It is the common belief of Christians that after the Fall there was no salvation for sinners but in Jesus Christ. But how were men saved by a redemption that was not effected for ages after they had lived and died? They were saved, it is said, by faith in the coming Saviour. But how did faith save them? Their faith was counted unto them for righteousness. But how was their faith counted unto them for righteousness? Faith was the forerunner of righteousness. Faith in Christ before the Incarnation was perfected by the righteousness of Christ after the Incarnation. No man can be saved without being regenerated, and no one could be regenerated until the Lord was glorified. He was the first-fruits of them that slept, the first-born of every creature, the beginning of the creation of God. Whatever else these Scripture declarations include, they teach the all-important truth, that the Lord Jesus Christ was the Author, because the beginning, of that spiritual awakening from the sleep of spiritual death into which mankind had fallen, which prepared them to receive the life which Christ had to give them; the first of every creature in whom fallen humanity was born again, and thus the beginning of that new creation by which men would become new creatures.

We have already spoken on this subject, in explaining how the faithful who lived before the Lord's coming were able to receive from Him, and through His redemption, the forgiveness of sins that were past. They remained in the middle state, as prisoners of hope, until the Lord had risen from the dead, when, by virtue of the works of redemption and glorification He had performed in the world, He was able to complete in them the work of regeneration, which could not be completely effected before. Those who thus waited for deliverance were, as we have said, the spiritual, who had lived from the time of Noah. The judgment which took place in the world of spirits at the time of the Lord's first advent was upon the Ancient Church, or on all who had lived in the world from the commencement of that Dispensation. For although the Hebrew and the Israelitish Churches were, in a certain sense, dispensations having a distinctive character, they were but prolongations of the Ancient Church, and had nothing of spiritual vitality in them except what they had derived from it. They were only provided to prolong the existence of the spiritual Church, until the fulness of time, when the Lord should come into the world.

While the reign of Solomon represented more peculiarly that part of the process of the Lord's glorification which consisted in His making His humanity Divine Good, it included in it, representatively, the Lord's work in the spiritual world, between His resurrection and ascension. Except in the Writings of the New Church no satisfactory view has ever been presented of where the Lord was or what He did during the forty days that intervened between these two great events.

Certainly no idea has been entertained of the Redeemer being engaged in performing a great work in the spiritual world, no less a work than reaping the harvest that had been growing up since the days of Noah, of separating the wheat from the tares, binding the tares in bundles to burn them, and gathering the wheat into His garner. The good had not only to be separated from the evil, like the Israelites from the Egyptians, but they had to be brought through the Red Sea, and led through the wilderness, and introduced through the Jordan into their land of Canaan. They had to pass through that perfecting process which had been commenced but could not be completed upon earth, that in them the prophetic utterance of the Psalmist might receive its accomplishment, "Thou hast ascended on high, Thou hast led captivity captive: Thou hast received gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them" (Ps. lxxviii. 18).

The death of Solomon represents, therefore, the Lord's ascension rather than His resurrection, which was represented by the death of David. This will further appear from the history itself.

Solomon, like David, reigned forty years. As types of the Lord, their forty years' reign finds each its parallel in the forty days during which the Lord was in the wilderness, and the forty days that intervened between His resurrection and ascension. The forty days during which our Lord was in the wilderness represented the duration of His temptations in the world; for a wilderness is symbolic of temptation, and forty, whether it be days or years, is expressive of their duration. The forty days which intervened between the Lord's resurrection and ascension were also symbolic of temptation; but the temptations now were not temptations of the Lord, but of the redeemed in the world of spirits.

We may now turn from this view of the subject, as relating to the Lord Himself, whom, in the highest sense, Solomon represented, to that view which shows it in relation to the Lord's disciples, who are privileged to follow Him, and to see His Divine work reflected and practically realized in their own.

Solomon, at the end of his forty years' reign, "slept with his fathers." This beautiful phrase, which occurs so often in the Old Testament Scriptures, which might convey to the Israelitish people only a carnal though tender feeling, expresses to the Christian a beautiful spiritual truth. The Christian is enabled to think of death as the gate of life, as that which introduces the soul into the company of the faithful of his spiritual as well as of his natural kindred. In the spiritual sense, death and burial do not mean resurrection into the other world merely—a resurrection which is common to the evil and to the good, for all live unto God—but they mean also resurrection into a new state of spiritual life, a state of spiritual love and faith. This resurrection is peculiar to the faithful. It is that which is called resurrection from the death

of sin unto the life of righteousness. This the wicked know not ; this they never experience. And it is for this reason that burial was refused among the Jews to such as had been guilty of great crimes, or even of grave offences ; and that death and the grave themselves are so frequently spoken of as if they implied an entire end of human existence. But when the phrase occurs of the dead being gathered to their fathers, a peculiar state which the regenerate have attained is implied by it. For the term father is expressive of the principle of goodness, as son is of the principle of truth ; for truth proceeds from good as a son from a father. Nor is anything meant by the names Father and Son, in relation to the Divine Being Himself, but the Divine Goodness and Truth. When our Lord declared that He came forth from the Father, and that He returned to the Father, He instructed us, that He, as the Divine Truth, came forth from the Divine Goodness, or as the Divine Wisdom from the Divine Love ; and that after effecting the work of regeneration and glorification, He returned to the Divine Goodness or Love—to the glory which He had with the Father before the world was ; but that He returned as the Word made flesh and glorified. In the highest representative sense, the phrase thus refers to the Lord's return to His Father, in and with His glorified Humanity. And this return was the result and the expression of so intimate a union, that the Lord, after He had made His humanity Divine Truth in the world, made it Divine Good after His departure out of the world ; and this making His humanity Divine Good was connected with and represented by His forty days' presence with the spirits of the just who were being made perfect. In relation to the Christian this language is expressive of a corresponding work. The regenerate are gathered to their fathers when they have passed from a state of truth into a state of goodness—from a state of wisdom into a state of love, from a state of faith into a state of charity. Such a change of state is but an image of that which is expressed by the Lord's returning to the Father, for the states of life attainable by the faithful are but the shadows as they are the effects of those which the Lord effected in Himself. Because He lives, we shall live also. Because He lifted His humanity up from its earthly state, He will draw all men who are willing to be drawn from their earthly states unto Himself. Because He has returned to His Father, we can ascend to Him as our Father. Because He has become as to His humanity the Divine Love itself, we can be raised into a state of love.

But Solomon not only slept with his fathers, but he was buried in the city of David his father. David represented the Lord as Divine Truth. But David is here spoken of as a father. And David as a father is expressive of Divine Truth derived from Divine Good. Truth with the regenerate exists in two different states ; or, there are two kinds of

truth which they possess in the two general stages of their regeneration. There is a truth that leads to goodness, and there is a truth derived from goodness. In the first general stage of the regenerate life, the Christian acquires a knowledge of goodness, and by means of that knowledge he strives after goodness. His first truth, therefore, has not goodness in it, his first faith has not love in it, because he is as yet only striving after goodness and love. But when goodness and love have been attained, his truth and faith change their character. His truth becomes united to good, his faith to love. Henceforth his truth is no longer a means and an instrument by which good is sought after and attained, but a means and instrument by which good works out its own purposes by truth; faith is no longer a faith that looks and strives after love, but a faith that works by love, or by which love works out its ends. Such is the truth and such is the faith of the regenerate, as distinguished from those of men who are being regenerated. Entrance into this new state of life is spiritually meant by Solomon being buried in the city of David his father. That city was Zion. As a city it represents truth of the highest kind—truth grounded in goodness—the goodness that comes from love to the Lord. The city of David his father is the truth of the Church derived from the Divine Truth of the Divine Good itself. In reference to the regenerate, the death and burial of the great king of Israel point in the significant language of representatives to the new birth of the soul into the life of heavenly love and truth, which may be considered as completing that sublime work, which is the first and last end of all the other Divine works of the Lord, the regeneration and salvation of the human soul.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE PREDICTED REVOLT OF THE TEN TRIBES.

1 *Kings* ii. 29-35.

OUR work would have ended with the reign of Solomon, had not his death been followed by an event, the explanation of which is necessary to a complete view of the representative history of the first three kings of Israel. The Lord's great work, which the reign of these kings represented, was not completed in His resurrection, nor even in His ascension, but in the pouring out of His Spirit on the apostles on the day of Pentecost. The circle of His Divine work was then completed; and with the diffusion of the Spirit, which could now be given in fulness because that Jesus was now fully glorified, by which the apostles were endued with power from on high, the Lord's Church on

earth had its actual commencement. The reign of the three kings was not ended by the death of Solomon, but is to be followed in its immediate consequences in the division of the tribes into two kingdoms, which the Lord had announced to the king after he sinned against Him.

The division of the tribes into two kingdoms, although the remote consequence of Solomon's sin and the immediate result of Rehoboam's folly, was representative of no less an event than the separation into two kingdoms of the Lord's heaven, which had previously existed as one.

Here, again, there seems to be a discordance if not an actual conflict between the human and earthly type and the Divine and heavenly antitype. A national calamity, the consequence of Solomon's sin, represents a heavenly benefit, the result of the Lord's righteousness. Yet the disparity is only seeming. Besides the general truth, that it is the function and not the man that represents, there is the particular truth, that priests and prophets and kings represented both the Lord and the Church; and in this they were true types of the Lord Himself. When Aaron ministered at the altar he represented the Lord, when he made the golden calf he represented the people. When Hosea reproved and threatened judgments against the people for their sins he represented the Lord, when he was commanded to take to himself a wife of whoredoms it was to represent the Church. When David opposed the enemies of Israel he represented the Lord, when he numbered the people he represented the Church. The Lord differed from all priests and prophets and kings essentially in this, that He did no evil, neither was guile found in His mouth; therefore in this respect He could not represent the Church. But although He could not represent the Church in all He did, He could represent the Church in all He suffered. As the prophets were commanded to do certain sinless but symbolic acts as signs to the people of the state of the Church amongst them, so the Lord, in some things that He did and in all that He suffered, was a sign unto the people of the state of the Church as it had then become. The Lord was the Word; and all that the Jews did to Him personally, therefore all that He suffered at their hands, represented what the Jewish Church had done to the Word; His sufferings were thus signs of the state of the Church, as manifested in what the Jews did and in what He endured.

But the disparity between the type and the antitype, in the revolt of the ten tribes, and the permanent division of the Israelitish nation into two separate kingdoms, is only seeming. The division of heaven into two distinct kingdoms, though a Divine arrangement, and the result of the Lord's works of Redemption and Glorification, was yet in itself an imperfection, and a consequence of the altered condition

of the human mind, which the Fall had produced, or, rather, which had been produced by Divine goodness and wisdom for the purpose of preventing the otherwise irremediable effects of the Fall.

The human mind consists of two great faculties, which are essential to human nature, which are will and understanding. In virtue of these man is possessed of liberty and rationality, by which he is distinguished from the whole animal creation, which act from instinct and appetite. It is in virtue of these faculties that man, by creation, is an image and likeness of God. For God consists of a Divine will and a Divine understanding. But these in God are not faculties but powers. In God will is infinite Love and understanding is infinite Wisdom. In man will is the created and finite capacity for receiving from God a finite measure of His love and the faculty of loving from that love ; and understanding is the capacity of receiving from God a finite measure of His wisdom and the faculty of thinking and reasoning wisely from that wisdom.

But man is not an image of God simply and solely in virtue of his possessing will and understanding, but in virtue of will and understanding being united, and forming one undivided mind. God is not God because He has a Divine will and a Divine understanding, or because He is infinite Love and infinite Wisdom, but because His will and understanding or His love and wisdom are so perfectly one that they ever act in unity. His love is of His wisdom and His wisdom is of His love ; thus His love is the love of wisdom and His wisdom is the wisdom of love ; so that His love can never act otherwise than wisely and His wisdom can never act otherwise than lovingly. Besides, love is the *Esse*, and wisdom is the *Existere*, of the Divine nature. Love in God is the parent of wisdom, and wisdom is the offspring of love ; and Love is in wisdom and wisdom is in Love. Love is the Eternal Father, Wisdom is the Eternal Son. What the Scriptures have thus personified, an obscure and materialistic theology has converted into persons ; so that in the Creed there is one person of the Father, and another person of the Son, and another of the Holy Spirit ; and these three persons are one God.

Man, as a created image of God, was so constituted, that his will and his understanding acted in unity. His will being the *esse*, and his understanding the *existere*, of his nature, or, willing being the parent of thinking, and thinking the offspring of willing, he could not think otherwise than he willed, nor will otherwise than he thought. So long as man remained in a state of integrity, or in the state of order in which he was created, his mind was in harmony, and acted in unison, with the mind of God. While he continued to will what was good, he naturally and necessarily thought what was true ; for good affections in the will spontaneously produced true thoughts in the understanding.

This was the normal state and condition of man. His mind was then, the Eden and garden of God ; and while the love of God, as his tree of life, was in the midst, all the lower affections and appetites of his nature, which were the beasts of the field, and the fowls of the air, and the fishes of the sea, and every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth, were under his dominion.

But beside the tree of life there grew the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The potential existence of opposites was inseparable from the actual existence of man. A being who united in himself a spiritual and immortal soul and material and mortal body had these opposites in himself. God and self, heaven and the world, matter and spirit, sense and reason, mortality and immortality, are opposites, not indeed in themselves, or in respect to the Creator, but in respect to man, as a thinking and sentient being. These opposites are the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Created man had necessarily the faculty of perceiving and the power of choosing between them. Rationality was the faculty of perceiving, liberty was the power of choosing. Man, from his first creation, and in his best state, must have seen that the love of self and the love of God, the love of the world and the love of heaven, the love of the body and the love of the soul, the love of mortality and the love of immortality, as ends, are opposites, and that he must exercise his choice between them. A wise choice gave him a wide range of satisfactions and delights ; he might freely eat of every tree of the garden ; but of the tree of the knowledge he must not eat nor even touch it, "for in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."

Notwithstanding the experienced advantages and delights of goodness, and the warnings against transgressing the Divine command, the will of man prevailed over the will of God. Man took of the fruit of the forbidden tree, and that death which was threatened passed upon the transgressors and thence upon all men. The Scriptures reveal, in the expressive language of correspondence, how this took place. The sensual in man prevailed over the spiritual, the animal over the human. The poison of the serpent entered into the blood, which is the life or soul of the flesh, and no remedy could restore what sin had taken away till the woman's seed should bruise the serpent's head.

The manner in which the Fall was effected is in harmony with the view which has been presented of the condition, we may say with the constitution of human nature, as it originally came from the hand of God ; and formed in His own image and likeness. We have seen that, in the state of order in which man was created, the will was the paramount faculty of the mind, and that the understanding spontaneously acted under the influence of the will. We find, therefore, that, in the

introduction of evil, the will was first seduced, and the understanding yielded to its persuasive influence. The serpent deceived Eve, Eve persuaded Adam. The tempter did not apply himself to the man but to the woman, knowing that if she were gained over, he would follow. In the Word man and woman represent and symbolize the understanding and the will, because the man is more intellectual than the woman, and the woman is more affectional than the man. Thus by the sacred symbolism of Divine Revelation we are instructed, in agreement with the original condition of human nature, how mankind were originally seduced from the path of life and light to the way of darkness and death.

And now it was that mankind entered on that course of evil in which they had no power of self-control. The understanding being subject to the will, men had no power of reflecting on the state of the will, therefore no discriminative knowledge of its character, therefore could neither judge of its state nor correct it. As, when the will was in the love of goodness, the understanding was in the light of truth ; so now, when the will was in the love of evil, the understanding was in the darkness of error. The wish was then truly father to the thought. Men thought as they felt, believed as they were inclined, and it was then impossible to convince a man against his will. The understanding was the reflection of the will, and could not be more or other than its image.

Had this condition of the human mind continued, mankind must have gone on unchecked in their downward career till the human race had perished. It did continue during the whole period of the existence of the Church or dispensation which was first established in the world. No organic change could be effected during the existence of the first or Most Ancient Church, which, from its primeval excellence, was called Adam or Man.

The change which was required to make the salvation and even the preservation of the race a possibility, was effected when the first dispensation had come to an end, and it had been followed by another, and one of an entirely different character. The end of the first dispensation is described by the Flood, and the preservation of a remnant, from which a new dispensation might be commenced, is described by the family of Noah being saved by means of the ark. It is now generally acknowledged that the account of the Flood and of the ark cannot be taken literally. No such a flood can have occurred, no such an ark can have been constructed and have floated on the waters, and no such a collection of animals can have been made as would preserve a thousandth part of the existing species. In the days of ignorance such narratives as those of Creation and the Flood could, in simplicity, be accepted and believed, and be the means of sustaining faith in the creative and preservative power of God. But what is Divinely inspired

is for all times, and may be understood in simplicity by the simple and in wisdom by the wise. Only, we must not think that scientific or worldly wisdom can open the gate to Divine knowledge. The cherubim with their flaming sword keep the way of the tree of life against those who have eaten of the tree of knowledge. But the gate is opened to those who seek admission in the spirit of humility and in the fear of the Lord. And they must, in these instances especially, seek to penetrate within the letter, since it is the spirit that quickeneth, and all the words of the Lord are spirit and are life.

In the spirit of the sacred record, which seems as if it were the narrative of a deluge which submerged the whole earth, and swept every vestige of human and animal life away, we have the history, not of a flood of waters, but of falsities, that overspread the whole Church, and destroyed everything in which was the breath of spiritual life, except the remnant which a merciful Providence in all such cases saves from the general wreck. But how was even this remnant to be restored to a better state, if the mind remained in its original condition, in which the understanding was completely under the influence of the will, and the will had become so depraved, that it entirely corrupted the understanding, and rendered it incapable of seeing or believing anything but what was agreeable to the inclinations of the will? There was only one way of providing for the reformation of the human race, and enabling them to make a new beginning under a new dispensation; and that was to give them the power of knowing the state of their own hearts, and employing that knowledge for the purpose of correcting and improving them. The Lord, therefore, miraculously separated the understanding from the will; and by emancipating that faculty from the dominion of the will, gave it the power of being instructed and enlightened, and of being able to reflect on the state of the will, and to look into it and judge of it by the light of truth. The opening of this faculty is meant by Noah opening the window of the ark, to see if the waters were abated, and sending forth his winged messengers, those emblems of human thoughts, to ascertain whether the dry land had appeared. The dove with her olive branch shows the effect and the promise of the exercise of the new intellectual power of expanding the wings of thought and surveying the state and condition of the mind. Instead of the understanding being subject to the will, the will was made as it were subject to the understanding; for the understanding could be raised above the will, like the dove soaring above the troubled waters, and could pluck the olive branch of reviving hope and returning peace to the human mind and to the human race. But this is a subject of so much interest and importance that we give a quotation from the Writings which places it in a clear light. It comes appropriately under the

merciful assurance, "I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake" (Gen. viii. 21): "This signifies that man would not any more avert himself like the man of the posterity of the Most Ancient Church. To curse signifies in the internal sense to avert himself. . . . The man of the Most Ancient Church was of such a nature that with him will and understanding constituted one mind, or that with him love was implanted in his will and simultaneously with it faith, which filled the other or intellectual faculty of his mind. Hence their descendants were so hereditarily constituted that their will and understanding made one; wherefore when self-love and the unbridled lusts originating in it began to possess their will, which had previously been the habitation of love to the Lord and charity to the neighbour, not only did the voluntary faculty or will become altogether perverse, but at the same time the intellectual faculty or understanding, until at length the last posterity immersed truths in their lusts and became Nephilim or giants. Hence they acquired such a nature that it was impossible they could be restored, because both faculties of their mind, or their whole mind, was destroyed. But as this was foreseen by the Lord, it was provided that man might be built up again, which was effected by his being rendered capable of reformation and regeneration as to the intellectual part of his mind, whereby a new will, or conscience, might be implanted in him, by which the Lord could introduce the good of love and charity and the truth of faith. Thus by the Divine mercy of the Lord man was restored."

These two faculties may be called the two kingdoms of the human mind. Good is the governing power in the will, and truth is the governing power in the understanding. Such at least is now the condition of the human mind. Originally, when these two faculties were so united that they acted together, they formed but one kingdom. They were like the tribes of Judah and Israel when they were united under David and Solomon. The separation of these faculties was the division of the mind into two kingdoms, and this was represented by the division of Judah and Israel into two separate kingdoms under the reign of Solomon's son and successor.

The original union of the two faculties of the human mind was the producing cause of the original constitution of the angelic heaven, which, before the coming of the Lord in the flesh, consisted but of one kingdom; and the change which was effected in the condition of the human mind, by which a separation was made between the faculties of will and understanding, was the producing cause of the division of heaven into two kingdoms at the time of the Incarnation. This is the great event represented by the revolt of the ten tribes, and the permanent existence thence forward of the two separate kingdoms of Judah and Israel.

In the separation which took place between the two essential faculties of the mind the analogy with the historical event may be very clearly seen. In regard to the tribes, evil was the cause of the revolt and separation. It was not the tribe of Judah that revolted from the ten tribes, but they that revolted from Judah ; and it was they that formed themselves into a new kingdom. So in the human mind : evil was the cause of their separation ; it was not the will that revolted from the understanding, but the understanding from the will, and that became a new kingdom and an independent power. The analogy is as perfect in regard to heaven ; but the consideration of this we reserve for another chapter.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE TWO KINGDOMS OF JUDAH AND ISRAEL.

1 *Kings* xii.

ONE of the adversaries whom God stirred up against Solomon, and who lifted up his hand against the king, was Jeroboam, the son of Nebat. As he is evidently representative of that principle which lay at the foundation of the spiritual separation which the division of the twelve tribes of Israel represented, it is necessary to turn our attention to his history during the reign of Solomon, as given in chapter ix.

The first fact we learn respecting Jeroboam is that he was an Ephraimite. The tribe of Ephraim, the descendants of the younger son of Joseph, represented, as we have had occasion to show, the intellectual part of the mind, as Manasseh represented the voluntary part. These two sons of Joseph, therefore, represent in epitome what was represented by the whole house of Israel, with the characteristic difference between Judah and the ten tribes which finally ultimated itself in their division into two kingdoms. As Ephraim represented the intellectual faculty of the mind, he represented also, as a matter of course, the spiritual principle itself, and thence the spiritual kingdom in the Church and in heaven. His paternal name answers to this ; for to look or regard, which Nebat means, is expressive of intellectual sight. But Jeroboam's mother was a widow, whose name was Zeruah. A widow is one who is in goodness and desires truth. But Jeroboam's widowed mother bore the extraordinary name of Leper, which indicates that the goodness she represented was mixed with evil, and was thus to some extent profaned. Such indeed was the root of the intellect of those who constitute the Ancient or Spiritual Church, and even the spiritual heaven itself. With the spiritual the original will is corrupt, and is never

renewed, as with the celestial, into the likeness of God which it has lost. With the spiritual a new will is formed in the intellectual part of the mind. Being formed by means of truth, it is therefore the will of truth rather than of goodness. This new will, with those who are born again, holds the former will in subjection, or, becoming the active and actuating power of the mind, it supersedes the function of the original faculty. Yet the old root is never entirely destroyed. It is that corrupt will which every one feels, and the disturbing influence of which even the children of God have cause to lament. It was this leprous will which made Paul declare that when he would do good evil was present with him, and in the bitterness of his spirit exclaim, "Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" This is the carnal mind which is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. Although this carnal will can never, with the spiritual, be either restored or extinguished, it can be subdued. To both of these facts the same apostle bears experimental testimony. After speaking of the two conflicting laws, the law in his members that warred against the law of his mind, he exclaims, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin" (Rom. vii. 24, 25).

Jeroboam, who was a mighty man of valour, had by his industry commended himself to Solomon's favour when the king built Millo, and repaired the breaches of the city of David his father; and he made him ruler over all the charge of the house of Joseph. Millo was a fortress on Mount Zion, and was originally built by David (2 Sam. v. 9). The charge of the house of Joseph was no doubt part of "the levy which king Solomon raised; for to build the house of the Lord, and his own house, and Millo, and the wall of Jerusalem" (ix. 15). Jeroboam, who thus laboured to repair the breaches of the city of David, was himself to be instrumental in opening a breach in the kingdom of David which was never to be repaired. Yet in performing that work, Solomon, and Jeroboam, and the house of Joseph were performing a good work, and one not unnecessary, or inconsistent with, that breaking up of the kingdom into two, for which both Solomon and his servants were, in a different manner, preparing the way.

The cause of Jeroboam lifting up his hand against the king was one that was likely to inspire him with motives of ambition, although it ought to have restrained him from any hostile action during Solomon's lifetime. "When Jeroboam went out of Jerusalem, the prophet Ahijah the Shilonite found him in the way; and he had clad himself with a new garment; and they two were alone in the field: and Ahijah caught the new garment that was on him, and rent it in twelve pieces: and he said to Jeroboam, Take thee ten pieces: for thus saith the Lord

the God of Israel, Behold, I will rend the kingdom out of the hand of Solomon, and will give ten tribes to thee." It is easy to see the meaning of this sign, as it refers to the kingdom of Israel, but its symbolism in reference to the division of the one kingdom in heaven is not so obvious. Garments are emblematical of truths, for these invest goodness as garments clothe the body, and perform for it corresponding uses. It was for this reason that so many and minute directions were given for the garments of Aaron. His garments also represented the spiritual kingdom of the Lord. On account of this representation, God Himself is spoken of as being clothed with light as with a garment, for the garment with which He is clothed is His Divine Truth which covers His Divine Goodness. It is truth also that is capable of being divided or rent into pieces. Goodness is one, but truth is various according to reception, and although it does not divide, it modifies, the good with which it is connected. It is from this circumstance that, however variously truth may be received by men, if all are actuated by goodness they are one. So the Church may be one in goodness and love, although it may be various as to doctrine. So the celestial and spiritual heavens are united in love although they are distinguished by truth. The Church may be divided as regards truth and doctrine and yet may be one in spirit: as Israel was divided into two kingdoms, which yet could live at peace with one another; and as heaven is divided into two kingdoms, which yet are united by charity.

The separation which was effected, at the end of the first and the beginning of the second Church, between the human faculties of will and understanding, was necessarily followed by the division of heaven into two distinct kingdoms. Heaven takes its form as well as its state from the state and form of those of whom it consists. Regenerate man is a little heaven, and heaven is the greatest regenerate man. While the faculties of will and understanding were inseparably united in the individual man, their representatives in the Grand Man could not have a separate existence. So long as the human mind was one, heaven, which consists of regenerated human minds, was one also. When the human mind came to be divided, heaven underwent a corresponding division. The division of heaven into two kingdoms could not take place until the time of the Incarnation. Not till then did the Ancient Church come to a complete end by the last judgment which the Lord performed upon it in the spiritual world. To this event our Lord referred when He said, "Now is the judgment of this world, now shall the prince of this world be cast out;" and when He said, "I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven." For the world spiritually means the Church; and Satan means those in the other world who were opposed to and infested the spiritual, who were preserved in the middle state, preparatory to their being elevated into heaven, when

the Lord had risen from the dead and ascended on high. The heaven from which Satan fell was the imaginary heaven, which the false and unfaithful in the Church on earth had formed for themselves in the world of spirits, into which all departed souls first enter after death. The faithful who had been preserved in the middle state from the time of the Flood and the days of Noah, or from the commencement of the Ancient Church, formed the spiritual or second heaven, which is also the spiritual kingdom.

But the second heaven, or the spiritual kingdom, was not formed of those only who had been preserved in the world of spirits. The heaven which had been formed of those who belonged to the Most Ancient Church, which was a celestial Church, constituted the one kingdom of which heaven originally consisted, which was celestial, and still constitutes the celestial kingdom, as distinct from the spiritual.

Although originally there was but one heaven, and that heaven constituted but one kingdom, yet that one heaven and kingdom had in it the essential elements of all the three heavens and of the two kingdoms of which the universal heaven now consists. The Grand Man was in this respect like the individual man. From his first creation man consisted, mentally, of will, understanding, and action. By the change which took place in the condition of the human mind at the time of the Flood nothing was added to the mind or taken from it. The same faculties remained, they were only differently circumstanced in relation to each other. They acquired, so to speak, a separate individuality—a separate but not independent existence. The mind acquired a kind of double consciousness; the power of thinking and willing separately. The Grand Man also consisted originally of will, understanding, and action. These are the elements of the three heavens and of the two kingdoms. The celestial heaven is the will of the Grand Man, the spiritual heaven is his understanding, and the ultimate heaven is his action. Originally all these were united in one, as they originally were in the individual man, and, as in him, they had no distinct consciousness, and therefore had no distinct activity. When heaven was formed into two kingdoms, it was not entirely by the formation of a second heaven out of those who belonged to the Ancient or Spiritual Church, but it was partly by a division of the celestial heaven itself, as formed from among those who had lived in the world during the time of the Adamic Church. The celestial heaven was necessarily internal and external. When God assumed man's nature, as it had become both by change of state and change of condition, and had, by glorification, made His Humanity the great Archetype of all order in heaven and on earth, He made an organic change in heaven corresponding to that which He had made in human nature

in the world. The Humanity of the Lord is Divine-celestial, Divine-spiritual, and Divine-natural; and these in Him are the Archetypes of the three heavens, the celestial, the spiritual, and the natural. But these three heavens constitute two kingdoms. The two higher heavens form these two kingdoms; for the lowest heaven does not of itself form a kingdom, but it is the ultimate and basis of the two superior heavens. It consists of two kinds of angels, celestial-natural and spiritual-natural, the celestial-natural being the ultimate of the celestial heaven, and these constituting together the celestial kingdom, and the spiritual-natural being the ultimate of the spiritual heaven, and these forming together the spiritual kingdom.

When there was but one heaven and one kingdom, that one heaven, as we have said, contained the elements of the three heavens, and that one kingdom contained the elements of both kingdoms. The celestial kingdom existed actually, the spiritual existed potentially, not only in those who were in the world of spirits, but in a part of those who were in heaven. That heaven consisted, as every heaven does, of an internal and an external; and the internal was celestial and the external was spiritual. The internal was love to the Lord and the external was love to the neighbour; and love to the Lord is the celestial principle, and love to the neighbour is the spiritual principle. In that ordination or arrangement of the heavens which took place as a result of the Lord's glorification, the external of the celestial heaven receded and became the nucleus of the spiritual heaven, to which were added and around which were gathered those who were elevated out of the world of spirits; and these together formed the second heaven and the spiritual kingdom. Those who had formed the external of the celestial heaven thus now formed the internal of the spiritual heaven. Those who had been the spiritual of the celestial heaven now became the celestial of the spiritual heaven; for love to the neighbour, which forms the external of the celestial heaven, forms the internal of the spiritual heaven. Thus, while the two heavens are distinct from each other, and form two distinct kingdoms, they are united by the love of the neighbour. There is, however, a difference in the character of neighbourly love as it exists in these two kingdoms; though one is the similitude of the other, they are in nothing exactly the same. The love of the neighbour in the celestial heaven is mutual love, and the love of the neighbour in the spiritual heaven is charity. Mutual love is like the love that exists between brothers and sisters, and charity is like that which exists between friends and connections—the difference between consanguinity and affinity. Yet these affections, while they differ, answer to each other, and are the means of joining the two heavens and kingdoms together. The distinction of the heavens into two kingdoms, and the connecting-link between them may be illustrated, as indeed they were

represented, by the division of the twelve tribes after their entrance into Canaan, which itself represented heaven. Nine entire tribes took their inheritance in the land of Canaan, and two entire tribes chose their inheritance in the land of Gilead, on the other side Jordan. But of the remaining tribe one half settled in Canaan and the other half in Gilead; and that tribe was Manasseh, which represented the very principle by which the two kingdoms in the heavens are joined together.

The separation of the one heaven into two kingdoms is described symbolically by Zechariah, in a prophecy that evidently relates to the coming of the Lord, and to His works of redemption and judgment: "Then shall the Lord go forth, and fight against those nations, as when He fought in the day of battle. And His feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the Mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south" (xiv. 3, 4). This is the day of which the prophet further says, that "the light shall not be clear, nor dark: but it shall be one day which shall be known to the Lord, not day, nor night: but it shall come to pass, that at evening time it shall be light. And it shall be in that day, that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem; half of them toward the former sea, and half of them toward the hinder sea: in summer and in winter shall it be. And the Lord shall be King over all the earth: in that day shall there be one Lord, and His name one" (verses 6-9). "In this passage the evening time is the last time of the Church when judgment takes place, for then it is evening to the evil but light to the good. This being known it may appear from the spiritual sense what the particulars involve and signify. Jehovah going forth and fighting against the nations signifies the last judgment to the evil; to go forth and fight is to execute judgment, and the nations are evils. That this was effected from Divine Love is meant by the Lord's feet standing upon the Mount of Olives; for the Mount of Olives when it relates to the Lord, signifies the Divine Love, Jerusalem signifies the Church as to truth, and the east of the Divine goodness. The Mount of Olives cleaving in the midst, part thereof going toward the east and toward the sea, leaving a great valley between, signifies the separation of those who are in good from those who are in evil; for, as has been said, the Mount of Olives signifies the Divine love, the east is where those dwell who are in the Divine good, and the sea where those are in evil. The half of the mountain removing toward the south and half toward the north, signifies the separation of those who are in falsities derived from evil from those who are in truths derived from good." In this explanation the cleaving of the mountain is said to mean the separation

of the evil from the good, which is the immediate effect of judgment. But the other separations resulting from the judgment are also included in its meaning. So we read that "the Mount of Olives represented heaven as to the good of love and charity, as the subject treated of is concerning the Lord and His coming; the Mount of Olives signifies the good of love and charity, thus the Church, for these constitute the Church; that the Church should recede from the Jewish nation and be established among the Gentiles is signified by that mountain being cleft asunder toward the east, towards the sea, toward the south, and toward the north." This being meant by the prophecy when applied to the Church, when applied to heaven it describes the separation which was effected in it, by which it was divided into two kingdoms. This division was the necessary result and ultimate effect of the division that had been miraculously effected between the two constituent faculties of the mind, when the will, which then ruled the understanding, had become so corrupt that "every imagination of the thoughts of man's heart was only evil continually."

While the one kingdom was separated into two, the one heaven was divided into three. And these three heavens are in the spiritual world what the three dispensations of the Church—the Most Ancient, the Ancient, and the Israelitish—were in the natural world, Celestial, Spiritual, and Natural. These three dispensations of the Church on earth arose out of the states of mankind, who passed successively through these three descending degrees of religious life. Yet these three heavens form but two kingdoms, for there are but two essential faculties of the mind, the will and the understanding, as there are but two fountains of life in the body, the heart and the lungs, and as there are but two principles of spiritual life, goodness and truth, or love and faith. There is indeed a third, which is action, and in religion is work, but this is the use resulting from the combined effort of other two, and is their ultimate form. This ultimate, which is action or work, is what the Israelitish dispensation was to the other two. It was a dispensation of works, which had no life but that which had descended to it from the two previous dispensations. The Israelitish was not therefore properly a Church, but the representative of a Church. It was a dispensation in which their great virtue was obedience, obedience to law and ritual, with little perception of their true purpose and meaning. So with the three heavens, the highest is love, the second is charity, the last is obedience. And as these have been produced from the three elements of human nature and degrees of spiritual life, they are the divinely provided receptacles and eternal habitations of human souls, according as, during their sojourn upon earth, they attain to any one of these states. This ordination or arrangement of heaven, which was one of the works that the Lord performed at the time of

His Incarnation, was a result of the past, and an adaptation to the future, states of mankind, and is therefore an evidence of the condescension of Divine Goodness and Wisdom to their imperfections.

When, after the revolt of the ten tribes and the establishment of a second kingdom under Jeroboam, Rehoboam "assembled all the house of Judah, with the tribe of Benjamin, an hundred and fourscore thousand chosen men, which were warriors, to fight against the house of Israel, to bring the kingdom again to Rehoboam the son of Solomon, the word of God came unto Shemaiah the man of God, saying, Speak unto Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, king of Judah, and unto all the house of Judah and Benjamin, and to the remnant of the people, saying, thus saith the Lord, Ye shall not go up, nor fight against your brethren the children of Israel: return every man to his house; for this thing is from Me."

Had the first or primeval Church remained in its integrity, there would have been no need for the Lord to come into the world; and heaven, like the Church, would have continued to be one. Its fall was foreseen, and a remedy was provided. No less an event than the manifestation of God in the flesh was the answer which Divine Love gave to man's departure from the condition in which he had been created. All the results of that marvellous act of Divine goodness and mercy were the means of providing for the salvation and happiness of mankind. The Lord had followed man on his downward course, accommodating His dispensations to his states and necessities, and ordinating heaven itself to his altered condition. Whether man's declension and the means provided for his restoration shall finally result in his elevation to a higher state than that from which he has departed, is a question which may seem more curious than profitable. Yet it admits, if not of a positive, at least of a hopeful answer. The history of the race is like that of the individual. Man, collectively as well as individually, has his infancy, his youth, and his manhood. There is, indeed, one important difference between the infancy of unfallen and that of fallen man. Both are characterized by innocence. But the innocence of primeval man was not, like that of man as he now is, the innocence of ignorance. Originally, wisdom was inscribed on innocence, and was as natural to man as instinct is to animals. Now, wisdom is not an inheritance but an acquisition. Born in ignorance, man has everything to learn. He must acquire knowledge, that by knowledge he may acquire intelligence, and by intelligence wisdom. He therefore begins where primeval man ended. But primeval wisdom differed in its character as much as in its birth from that which is now attainable. Wisdom was not, with primeval man, applied knowledge. What with us is knowledge was with him perception, and his perception did not rest on the superficial qualities

of things, but penetrated into their interior nature and spiritual meaning. His science was that which recognises the relation between the Creator and His creation, and between heavenly and earthly things. Now, we begin with the science of earthly things, and this forms the common foundation of all our possible acquirements, even the highest. The question then is, May we on this foundation build a still higher and nobler superstructure than that which man would have reared had he remained in his original integrity? We think it is possible. Had not man fallen the Incarnation would have been unnecessary. But since that great event has taken place, and humanity has been glorified, and has added a new resplendence to the Sun of heaven, we may reasonably hope, if not conclude, that man may rise higher than the height from which he has fallen; and that in this sense we may understand the Divine promise that "of the *increase* of His government and peace there shall be no end." One thing there is of which we may be assured. The Lord has done for mankind all that it was possible for infinite love and wisdom to do; and nothing is needed to secure for them the full benefits of the Redemption that has been effected for them, and the Salvation that is freely offered to them, but their own consent to be made happy. Whatever degree of perfection men may be able to attain on earth, a place for every one has been prepared by the Lord's Divine Wisdom in the many-mansioned House of His Divine Love. Although on earth as in heaven there will always be diversity of gifts, there may be the same spirit; and even that diversity will produce a unity rich in its varied fulness. And we have a promise of the time when all will bring their gifts into the one sacred treasury, and when all shall know the Lord from the least unto the greatest, when the Lord shall be King over all the earth, when there shall be one Lord and His name one.

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